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**Preparations for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/171 of 18 December 2002, entitled "Preparations for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice", in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the proper follow-up to the resolution and to report thereon to the Assembly through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twelfth session. Accordingly, the report highlights the views of Member States, relevant specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other bodies and the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network on the agenda items and workshop topics for the Eleventh Congress. The report also highlights the organizational arrangements for the Congress, followed by a summary of the proceedings and action taken by the Commission at its twelfth session on the preparations for the Congress.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/171 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its eleventh session¹ and of its discussion on the preparations for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice;² and decided that the main theme of the Eleventh Congress should be "Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice".

2. With respect to the topics for discussion during the plenary session of the Eleventh Congress, the Assembly suggested four main topics (see below) and noted that Member States might refine those topics and propose additional topics at future intersessional meetings of the Commission for finalization at its twelfth session:

- (a) Effective measures against transnational organized crime;
- (b) Corruption: threats and trends in the twenty-first century;
- (c) Economic and financial crimes: challenges to sustainable development;
- (d) Making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice.

3. In its resolution 57/171, the Assembly also suggested that the following issues should be considered by workshops within the framework of the Eleventh Congress, and noted that Member States might refine those issues and propose additional workshop topics at future intersessional meetings of the Commission for finalization at its twelfth session:

- (a) Measures to combat economic crime: the role of the private sector;
- (b) Cross-border law enforcement cooperation;
- (c) Human rights in criminal justice;
- (d) Restorative justice: community involvement, diversion and other alternative measures;
- (e) Links between transnational organized crime and terrorism;
- (f) Measures to combat high-technology and computer-related crime;
- (g) Measures to combat money-laundering;
- (h) Combating corruption;
- (i) Crime prevention strategies for youth at risk;
- (j) Current practices in and ways of overcoming obstacles to extradition.

4. In the same resolution, the Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime³ of the Secretariat with the necessary resources, within the overall appropriations of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, for the preparations for the Eleventh Congress and to ensure that adequate resources were provided in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 to support the holding of the Congress; requested the Commission, at its twelfth session, to finalize the programme for the Eleventh Congress and to make its

final recommendations, through the Economic and Social Council, to the Assembly; and requested the Secretary-General to ensure the proper follow-up to the resolution and to report thereon to the Assembly through the Commission at its twelfth session.

5. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice discussed the preparations for the Eleventh Congress and concluded its deliberation by recommending to the General Assembly for approval the provisional agenda for the Congress, as well as proposals on other substantive organizational matters.

6. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 57/171.

II. Views of Member States on the agenda items and workshop topics for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

7. The General Assembly may recall that the Secretary-General, in his report on preparations for the Eleventh Congress (A/57/154), provided a summary of the various proposals made by the responding Member States and other entities on the substantive agenda items and workshop topics. What follows should be read in conjunction with those proposals. A summary of the additional views of the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, Japan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Venezuela is presented below on the possible agenda items and workshop topics to be considered by the Eleventh Congress.

A. Agenda items

8. Argentina proposed the inclusion of the topic "Prevention of urban crime: new challenges" for discussion in the plenary session of the Eleventh Congress. Under that item, Argentina suggested that the following specific issues could be considered: (a) lessons learned in preventing urban crime and evaluating prevention strategies and public security policies; (b) functions, limits and the role of private security services in the context of crime prevention security policies; (c) strategies to prevent kidnapping and the connections between kidnapping and national and transnational organized crime; (d) discussion of the "no pay" strategy and the possible contribution of the private sector (for example, private security agencies, hostage negotiators and international insurance companies) to reducing kidnapping; (e) prevention of auto theft, motor vehicles being the main instrument, along with firearms, used in crimes of robbery with violence and the source of a black market in stolen vehicles, parts and components and the object of insurance fraud; (f) small arms: useful and effective strategies for civilian firearm disarmament; (g) prevention strategies to reduce the number of law enforcement officers killed; and (h) design and establishment of an international criminal violence index to measure trends in crime.

9. Bolivia recommended that the Eleventh Congress place emphasis on the analysis of the causes of corruption and the solutions proposed to combat that

scourge. Bolivia also recommended that the Eleventh Congress take account of factors relating to the prevention of economic and financial crimes and relevant cooperation among Member States, considering the significant impact that those crimes had on state resources, especially in poor countries.

10. Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed the inclusion of the topic "Abuse of chemical technologies in illicit drug production".

11. Brazil expressed its support for the topic "Effective measures against transnational organized crime", but suggested the inclusion of a sub-item on international trafficking in arms under that topic. Brazil recommended the inclusion of a new item on criminalization and penalization with emphasis on drug control policy. It also supported the inclusion of a sub-item on the role of the police in crime prevention and control, under the item "Making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice".

12. Colombia was of the view that "Effective measures against transnational organized crime" should be one of the priority topics for discussion during the plenary session of the Eleventh Congress and recommended that the following sub-items should be discussed under that topic: international crime concerned with trafficking in substances that cause physical and psychological dependence; transnational crime concerned with trafficking in persons; international crime concerned with trafficking in firearms; and conclusion, between Member States, of agreements on cooperation in criminal matters in connection with the search for suspects, extradition, freezing of assets and seizure of unlawfully acquired property. Colombia was of the view that corruption was a priority topic that required greater attention through study and through the adoption of joint measures by States to prevent and combat it.

13. Croatia was of the opinion that a major topic such as suppression of terrorism should be included as an agenda item of the Eleventh Congress. Croatia also suggested that the issue of terrorism could be considered within the framework of the Global Programme against Terrorism with a view to efficiently promoting the activities of the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

14. Qatar proposed the inclusion of the issues "Terrorism: its definitions and trends in the light of the new developments in the international scene" and "Means of cooperation between nations in combating terrorism".

15. Turkey proposed the inclusion of the topic "Effective measures against terrorism".

16. Venezuela supported the inclusion of the four agenda items listed in resolution 57/171 for the plenary sessions: (a) effective measures against transnational organized crime; (b) corruption: threats and trends in the twenty-first century; (c) economic and financial crimes: challenges to sustainable development; and (d) making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice. In that connection, Venezuela underlined the reasons behind supporting the above-mentioned four items, noting that the term "transnational organized crime" referred to criminal activity that extended beyond national borders, thus violating the respective laws of States. It involved activities carried out by structured groups, classified as "serious crimes" aiming at obtaining profit and/or political influence. Transnational organized crime included drug trafficking,

arms smuggling, exploitation of prostitution, kidnapping for the purposes of extortion, extortion through the provision of protection of business, trading in goods on the black market, money-laundering and encouraging and inciting corruption. Organized crime exploited the advantages and opportunities of globalization, causing international concern and constituting a real danger to regional and global stability. In view of the significant increase in organized crime and the practical difficulties frequently experienced in obtaining evidence, proof or any information about an offence, fighting the phenomenon would be a priority for consideration by the Eleventh Congress.

17. Venezuela was of the view that corruption was a phenomenon affecting all aspects of social structure and creating distortions not only in economic entities but also in the very planning of public policy, which could impede the social and economic development of States and thus have serious consequences on governance. It undermined the legitimacy of public institutions and damaged society, moral order and justice. There was a need to achieve maximum effectiveness in reducing the very high levels of impunity associated with corruption. There was also a need to evaluate and analyse threats, trends and new forms of corruption, to strengthen democratic institutions and to prevent economic distortions, misconduct in public office and the decline of social stability.

18. Venezuela also noted that modern societies were experiencing an increase in traditional property-related offences and in particular the emergence of new forms of economic crime. As economic interaction and technological innovations moved at an ever faster pace, this resulted in criminogenic factors giving rise to new forms of criminality. Consequently it would be essential to share information, harmonize legislation and increase vigilance with regard to organized crime and its economic ramifications. In that connection, international cooperation would be vital in investigating and prosecuting economic and financial crimes, as well as the creation of appropriate mechanisms to combat them.

19. Venezuela expressed the view that it would be desirable and timely to conduct a review or a survey of all existing international law related to crime prevention and criminal justice, approaching it firstly as a means of assessing the status of ratification of international instruments, with a view to encouraging those countries which had not yet signed to do so and secondly as a gauge of the impact of such instruments on the prevention and punishment of crime.

B. Topics for the workshops

20. Bolivia proposed that the workshop topics should be considered in the following order of priority: (a) human rights in criminal justice; (b) restorative justice: community involvement, diversion and other alternative measures; and (c) crime prevention strategies for youth at risk.

21. Brazil was of the view that the workshops should include the following topics: (a) the role of the city and the local community in crime control; (b) structural links between international arms and drug trafficking; (c) the limits of the mass imprisonment policy in tackling crime; and (d) the importance of police intelligence work in tackling crime.

22. Colombia recommended the following topics for consideration by the workshops, in order of priority: (a) measures to combat economic crime: the role of the private sector; (b) combating corruption; (c) restorative justice: community involvement, diversion and other alternative measures; (d) crime prevention strategies for youth at risk; (e) links between transnational organized crime and terrorism; (f) measures to combat high-technology and computer-related crime; (g) human rights in criminal justice; (h) measures to combat money-laundering; (i) cross-border law enforcement cooperation; and (j) current practices in and ways of overcoming obstacles to extradition.

23. Colombia recommended that the following concerns and issues be borne in mind: trafficking in human beings was a serious matter deserving attention by the workshops, noting that such a phenomenon seriously violated the dignity of and respect for the human person. It was considered to be the third most lucrative form of crime after the illicit drug trade and trafficking in firearms. Colombians and citizens of developing countries were victims of networks of traffickers in human beings. An additional reason for such a suggestion was the increase in the smuggling of migrants, especially those going to the industrialized countries, and its close links to trafficking in human beings. Such a situation urgently required the international community to become aware of and appreciate the danger that it represented and to join efforts to combat that scourge to humanity. Colombia also proposed the inclusion of the topic "Assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking in persons" for discussion under "Human rights in criminal justice". Colombia was of the opinion that the topic on crime prevention could also include the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements; control of trafficking in explosives at the international level; protection of witnesses who gave evidence against criminal organizations; establishment of penalties for firms or corporations that offered to undertake unlawful activities on behalf of such criminal groups; adoption of measures to prevent criminal groups from manipulating mandatory procedures with regard to public contracts as well as subsidies and licences in connection with commercial activities.

24. Ecuador was of the opinion that the workshop topics should be discussed in the following order: (a) human rights in criminal justice; (b) links between transnational organized crime and terrorism; (c) combating corruption; (d) crime prevention strategies for youth at risk; (e) current practices in and ways of overcoming obstacles to extradition; (f) measures to combat economic crime: the role of the private sector; and (g) restorative justice: community involvement, diversion and other alternative measures.

25. Oman expressed the view that the topics for the workshops should include: (a) combating drugs and economic crime, including the negative effects of globalization; (b) international cooperation among law enforcement agencies; (c) prison overcrowding; and (d) the analysis of trends in juvenile delinquency.

26. Saudi Arabia proposed the inclusion of the following additional topics: (a) factors contributing to the proliferation of corruption and ways to eliminate them; (b) poverty and its effect on increased crime; and (c) combating fraud and the threat that it constitutes at the global level. Saudi Arabia also suggested that the topic "Human rights in criminal justice" should be reformulated to read "Human rights in criminal justice and their preservation under all circumstances".

27. Turkey suggested the inclusion of the following topics, in order of priority: (a) current practices in and ways of overcoming obstacles to extradition; (b) links between transnational organized crime and terrorism; and (c) cross-border law enforcement cooperation.

28. Venezuela supported the inclusion of the following workshop topics: (a) combating corruption; (b) measures to combat money-laundering; (c) crime prevention strategies for youth at risk; and (d) measures to combat high-technology and computer-related crime. In suggesting those topics, Venezuela noted that under the topic on corruption, strategies, plans and methods of national preventive control should be discussed, followed by the issue of legal instruments to combat corruption. Attention should be given to the type of preventive policy that should be put in place to assist the private sector in dealing with corruption. In discussing measures to combat money-laundering, Venezuela was of the view that such a phenomenon eroded the normal financial system, resulting in illegal financing of businesses, unfair competition and the strengthening of organizations that subverted economic order and discredited state structures. It was therefore essential for financial assistance to be more transparent so that legitimate activities would be less vulnerable to exploitation by criminal organizations; equally important would be to keep abreast of new mechanisms for laundering money derived from crime and to ensure that countries had effective means to detect and punish money-laundering practices.

29. As regards crime prevention strategies for youth at risk, Venezuela stated that its constitution established that children and adolescents were full subjects before the law and should be protected by specialized courts, bodies and legislation, with full protection for all concerned. Venezuela noted the deficiencies in existing mechanisms to prevent the crimes committed by children and adolescents in many parts of the world. It was therefore important to promote a healthy younger generation with full and progressive exercise of their rights and guarantees. Venezuela was of the view that the topic "Measures to combat high-technology and computer-related crime" should be accorded special attention, as the international community was encountering serious difficulties in investigating and detecting offences of that type. Computer or "cyber" criminals operated freely, committing offences such as gaining unauthorized access or computer hacking, fraud, computer sabotage, drug trafficking and trafficking in children for the purpose of pornography. In Venezuela, two legal instruments governed that area, namely, the Special Act against Computer Crime and the Act on Data Messages and Electronic Signatures.

III. Views of relevant specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system

Office of Legal Affairs

30. The Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat indicated that during the consideration by the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly of the item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" at the fifty-seventh session of the Assembly some delegations in their statements had referred to links between

transnational organized crime and terrorism. That aspect should be taken into account in finalizing the substantive agenda for the Eleventh Congress.

Division for the Advancement of Women

31. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat expressed its readiness to cooperate fully in the preparations for the Eleventh Congress and to participate in it, as the proposed topics were directly related to primary concerns of the Division. Accordingly, the Division suggested that appropriate attention should be given by the Congress to the issue of trafficking in women and girls and also that that topic should be discussed at the regional preparatory meetings. The Division also pointed out that crime and drugs were often inextricably linked to trafficking in women and girls and exacerbated the plight of victims. Additionally, the Division recommended that gender perspectives—focusing on the different situation of women and men and the different impact of measures on women and girls as compared with men and boys—should be considered with regard to any proposed preventive and remedial actions and should be an integral part of any discussions at and final documents of the Congress and its regional preparatory meetings. The Division noted that it had strengthened its collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the recent past through, inter alia, development of training programmes on gender mainstreaming, production of briefing notes on gender and crime prevention and drug control as well as organization of joint workshops and training, and expressed its willingness to continue and enhance that collaboration in the future.

Economic Commission for Europe

32. The Economic Commission for Europe noted that it and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime had developed an excellent working relationship, with participation in each other's activities, and referred in particular to the two organizations' collaboration in supporting the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and its Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime in Bucharest. The Commission pointed out that the Regional Centre was successful and the first example of regional ownership. Task forces have been established within the Regional Centre to focus efforts on trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, commercial fraud, vehicle theft and customs valuation fraud, which reflected the concerns of Governments in the region. The Commission suggested that, in order to support crime prevention efforts, such issues should be included for consideration at the intersessional meetings prior to the twelfth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, so as to be taken into account in finalizing the substantive agenda for the Eleventh Congress.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

33. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean expressed its support for the organization of the regional preparatory meeting for the Eleventh Congress in Santiago and for any other activities related to crime prevention.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

34. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development expressed its interest in continued collaboration in areas of joint concern.

United Nations Environment Programme

35. The United Nations Environment Programme expressed support for the work of the Centre for International Crime Prevention and would be ready to collaborate on issues of mutual interest. The Programme would also extend its full support to the preparations for the Eleventh Congress.

International Civil Aviation Organization

36. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) noted the work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice. While certain activities in that field were not closely related to the daily work of ICAO, the general notion of crime prevention was significant for the Organization. ICAO devoted considerable efforts to dealing with the problem of unruly passengers, as elements of crime prevention and the exercise of criminal jurisdiction. In that regard, Guidance Material on the Legal Aspects of Unruly/Disruptive Passengers (ICAO Circular 288) had been developed, addressing a uniform list of offences, jurisdiction and the legal mechanisms available for combating the problem of unruly passengers.

Universal Postal Union

37. The Universal Postal Union expressed its willingness to enter into inter-organizational cooperation in the areas of international crime prevention. Since 1990, the mission of the Union's Postal Security Action Group had been to enhance the security and integrity of the international mail network and the broad initiatives of the Action Group had encompassed combating dangerous goods in the post, fighting drug trafficking and money-laundering, stemming the tide of fraud perpetuated by letters from the West African region, conducting quality of service and security reviews of international airports, securing the mail from loss or theft and bio-terrorism prevention issues. The Universal Postal Union would support further cooperation between it and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime towards common objectives and also expressed its willingness to offer the Postal Security Action Group specialists to attend future meetings and seminars of the Office on that subject for purposes of attaining common goals.

IV. Views of intergovernmental organizations and other entities

African Union

38. The African Union addressed issues of good governance that affected the development plans of African States. In that regard, the Union emphasized the importance of strengthening administrative structures, especially those needed for good governance, as it would have a positive influence on economic and political life, restrain corruption and make possible sustainable development by improving the delivery of aid. The Union also pointed out that social stability and foreign investors' attitudes would depend greatly on those factors, in particular in Africa. The Union had already been tackling the problems of illicit trafficking in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, organized crime, money-laundering

and corruption by using an integrated, well-coordinated and balanced approach in the context of sustainable human development. The Union suggested that the agenda items for the plenary sessions of the Eleventh Congress should include the followings topics: (a) poverty reduction through debt cancellation, which would be a strong tool for the prevention of illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (b) debt cancellation for preventive drug abuse education, a strategy for crime prevention for youth at risk; and (c) links between drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and terrorism. In addition, the Union recommended three workshop topics and round tables as follows: (a) drugs for arms: which way forward?; (b) the role of drug trafficking in sustaining conflicts; and (c) drug dependency and child soldiers: provision of alternative development programmes to replace criminal justice.

Commonwealth Secretariat

39. The Commonwealth Secretariat expressed its interest in cooperating with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the preparatory work for the Eleventh Congress.

Council of Europe

40. The Council of Europe noted that the general theme as well as the topics for the various workshops would meet the concerns being addressed at present within the Council: corruption, money-laundering, organized crime, computer-related crime, alternatives to imprisonment and juvenile delinquency. The Council suggested that the subject of strengthening the position of victims of crime both within and outside criminal proceedings might be added to the agenda of the Congress, as a follow-up to the discussions held during the Tenth Congress on offenders and victims. As to the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism, the Council of Europe indicated that the Committee of Ministers had mandated a Multidisciplinary Group on International Action against Terrorism with considering appropriate measures to strengthen member States' efforts to combat terrorist acts. The Multidisciplinary Group had drafted an Additional Protocol to the 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism,⁴ which would be opened for signature in 2004. The Committee of Ministers had adopted Guidelines on human rights and the fight against terrorism. In addition, the Multidisciplinary Group had also identified priority actions, five of which concerned the areas of criminal justice: apology of, and incitement to, terrorism; special investigation techniques; protection of witnesses; international law enforcement cooperation; and financing of terrorism. The Council of Europe hoped to be able to send a representative to the Eleventh Congress to report on the progress made by the Council in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, underlining the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which would continue to develop in the future to the mutual benefit of the two organizations.

European Police Office

41. The European Police Office (Europol) expressed its willingness to contribute to the preparations for the Eleventh Congress in relevant areas within its mandate and within budgetary resources.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

42. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development was of the view that international cooperation aiming at combating illegal migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, as well as cooperation on border management issues, should be priority concerns of the Eleventh Congress. The Centre was also preparing for the Ministerial Conference to Prevent Uncontrolled Migration, to be held in March 2003, which would be of direct relevance to the substantive preparations for the Congress.

V. Views of non-governmental organizations

43. The Friends World Committee for Consultation/Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the International Association of Judges and the International Federation of University Women expressed interest in the preparations for the Eleventh Congress.

44. The International Council of Women welcomed the intention of the United Nations to intensify cooperation with non-governmental organizations and expressed its interest in cooperating with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on all issues relevant to the status of women. The Council had disseminated information and reports on the Tenth Congress.

45. The International Police Association (Interpol) expressed full support for the Eleventh Congress and proposed to cooperate in any way possible in the fight against transnational organized crime, as organized crime had become too widespread for any single Government to combat effectively. For that reason, Interpol suggested that States should carry out joint and cross-border operations in order to be most effective and successful and should also adopt powerful new treaties, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I). Interpol also recommended that all States and organizations become involved in organizing ongoing consultations in the field of organized crime in order not to be "one step behind".

46. The World Muslim Congress supported full cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the preparations for the Eleventh Congress. It placed particular emphasis on restorative justice, as it had already included research on the evolution of restorative justice in its programme of work.

Institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network

47. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute expressed full support for the organization of workshops on any topics selected by the Commission. In addition, the Institute suggested that since the year 2005 would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of

Prisoners (Economic and Social Council resolution 663 (XXIV), annex). Member States might consider the desirability of including in the agenda one workshop devoted to the world situation of corrections and in particular to the most critical issues such as overcrowding, health and juveniles.

VI. Intersessional meeting of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

48. In its resolution 57/171, the General Assembly suggested that the topics for the substantive agenda items and for the workshops identified by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its eleventh session, as reflected in the resolution, might be refined by Member States at future intersessional meetings of the Commission. In response, an intersessional meeting of the Commission was held on 12 February 2003 to discuss any additional proposals as to substantive agenda items and workshop topics. Thailand, as host of the Eleventh Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts in the preparation of the Congress.

49. Argentina recommended the inclusion of urban crime, as a follow-up to the discussion of that issue at the Tenth Congress.

50. Japan was of the view that the workshop topics for the Eleventh Congress should include: (a) measures to combat high-technology and computer-related crime; (b) measures to combat money-laundering; and (c) combating corruption. Japan informed the meeting that the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders intended to organize a workshop dealing with measures to combat money-laundering.

51. Thailand was of the view that, following past practice, the number of workshop topics should not exceed four, so as to allow adequate time for a thorough discussion of the various issues before the workshops. In that connection, Thailand suggested the following four topics: (a) criminal justice reform; (b) combating transnational organized crime in all its manifestations, including its linkages to drug trafficking; (c) combating terrorism; and (d) economic and financial crime and illicit trade.

52. At the end of the intersessional meeting, and based on a proposal of Thailand, it was decided that an open-ended working group should be established to work out recommendations on the substantive agenda items and workshop topics, the meetings of which would be facilitated by the delegation of Thailand. The group met on 26 March and 30 April 2003 and its recommendations were reported to the Commission.

VII. Twelfth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

53. Regional groups, representatives of Member States and representatives of non-governmental organizations and the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network contributed to the discussion on the preparations for the Congress, shedding light on substantive aspects. The

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for the Eleventh Congress⁵ and also the draft resolution submitted by Thailand as host of the Congress.⁶

54. In highlighting the importance of the United Nations congresses, reference was made to the Ministerial Meeting on the Creation of an Effective United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, held in Versailles, France, from 21 to 23 November 1991,⁷ at which the role of the congresses had been defined, focusing on exchanging views between Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individual experts representing various professions and disciplines, the exchange of experience in research, law and policy development and the provision of advice. The achievements of past congresses were also highlighted, in particular in adopting internationally recognized standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice. With respect to future congresses, it was recommended that a small number of plenary sessions on specific topics be held, with a slightly longer period of time allocated to a high-level segment discussion, so as to raise the profile of international criminal justice issues within the political arena. The recommendations of the congresses should be adopted in the form of a declaration at the end of the high-level segment. The importance of holding intersessional meetings to support the preparations for the Congress was stressed.

55. The workshops were considered the main resource in terms of exchange of information and identification of new trends and best practices. Adequate time should be allocated to the workshops to allow for practical presentations and a focused and dynamic discussion and exchange of information on precise and well delineated issues. The institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network should be fully involved in the organization of the workshops, as they had the capability and the knowledge required for those events. In particular, the Commission was informed that the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy would be ready to play a role in relation to the workshop dealing with restorative justice and that the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime would play a similar role in relation to the workshop on crime prevention. The involvement and support of the Australian Institute of Criminology was also pledged in the organization of the workshops.

56. The importance for the regional preparatory meetings to make action-oriented recommendations and to identify policy options from regional perspectives, which would make a major contribution to the success of the Congress, was highlighted. Donor countries were encouraged to cooperate with developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to ensure their full participation in the preparatory process and the Congress itself. Satisfaction was expressed with the fact that the Congress would continue its past practice of holding ancillary meetings of non-governmental and professional organizations. Representatives of non-governmental organizations and the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network expressed their readiness to support the Secretariat with the coordination and organization of such meetings.

57. Referring to the report of the Secretary-General, the representative of Thailand expressed appreciation for the valuable and constructive views and recommendations of Member States and a number of specialized agencies, United Nations programmes and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

reflected in the report. He informed the Commission that, as host of the Eleventh Congress, the Government of Thailand had established a national committee, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed of representatives of high-level authorities, which would ensure the success of the organizational arrangements to be put in place for the Congress. On the occasion of the thirteenth session of the Commission, a visual presentation of the Queen Sirikit Convention Center and other available facilities would be made. Speakers expressed their appreciation to the Government of Thailand for offering to host the Congress and for submitting a draft resolution on the preparations for that event, in which relevant topics for the substantive agenda items and workshop issues had been identified.

58. The necessity for the cooperation of all Member States in the preparation of the Congress was highlighted, together with the role of the Secretariat in assisting with the preparation of the required documentation, the rules of procedure and public information programmes. In that regard, the view was expressed that such tasks should be carried out within the existing resources allocated for the Congress.

59. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission was informed that the preparations for the Eleventh Congress would be carried out in the most cost-effective manner and that relevant budgetary provisions would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. The appeal of the representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Group of African States to assist the least developed countries to participate in the regional preparatory meetings and in the Congress itself was noted.

60. At the end of its deliberations, the Commission recommended the following provisional agenda for approval by the General Assembly:

1. Opening of the Congress.
2. Organizational matters.
3. Effective measures to combat transnational organized crime.
4. International cooperation against terrorism and links between terrorism and other criminal activities in the context of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
5. Corruption: threats and trends in the twenty-first century.
6. Economic and financial crimes: challenges to sustainable development.
7. Making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice.
8. Adoption of the report of the Congress.

The Commission also recommended, for approval by the General Assembly, that the following issues be considered by workshops within the framework of the Eleventh Congress:

- (a) Enhancing international law enforcement cooperation, including extradition measures;
- (b) Enhancing criminal justice reform, including restorative justice;

- (c) Strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk;
- (d) Measures to combat terrorism, with reference to the relevant international conventions and protocols;
- (e) Measures to combat economic crime, including money-laundering;
- (f) Measures to combat computer-related crime.

VIII. Organizational arrangements

61. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice addressed some of the organizational arrangements, including the appointment of a secretary-general and an executive secretary for the Eleventh Congress, the dates and duration of the Congress, as well as the preparations for the regional preparatory meetings. In accordance with paragraph 2 (k) of General Assembly resolution 56/119 of 19 December 2001, each congress should be preceded by regional preparatory meetings, when necessary, and the costs of the regional preparatory meetings for each congress should be streamlined by holding them in conjunction with other regional meetings, shortening their duration and limiting the preparation of background documents. The Commission also addressed the issues of documentation and public information activities.

A. Appointment of a secretary-general and an executive secretary of the Eleventh Congress

62. Following past practice, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is expected to appoint a secretary-general and an executive secretary of the Eleventh Congress to perform their functions under the rules of procedure for the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice.

B. Venue

63. In its resolution 57/171, on the recommendation of the Commission, the General Assembly accepted with gratitude the offer of the Government of Thailand to host the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and requested the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with the Government of Thailand and to report to the Commission at its twelfth session. Such consultations were initiated and the results were reported to the Commission at its twelfth session.

C. Dates and duration

64. Consultations with the host Government and other Member States on possible dates for the Eleventh Congress revealed that the most suitable dates would tentatively be from 18 to 25 April 2005, with pre-congress consultations to be held

on 18 April 2005. Following past practice, the conclusions of the Congress will be considered by the Commission at its session in 2005, with a view to providing guidance on their implementation. The Commission also recommended that the high-level segment of the Eleventh Congress be held during the last three days of the Congress in order to allow heads of State or Government or government ministers to focus on the main substantive agenda items of the Congress.

D. Regional preparatory meetings

65. In response to General Assembly resolutions 56/119 and 57/171, the Secretary-General will proceed with the organization of the regional preparatory meetings prior to the holding of the Eleventh Congress. Such meetings are intergovernmental in nature. Representatives of Governments, entities of the United Nations system, including the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations will attend them. The main purpose of the meetings will be to facilitate an exchange of views and experience on the various issues to be discussed by the Eleventh Congress and to identify the main concerns and priorities of the respective regions. At its twelfth session, the Commission recommended to the General Assembly that the regional preparatory meetings be urged to examine the substantive agenda items and the workshop topics and to make action-oriented recommendations to serve as a basis for the draft recommendations and conclusions for consideration by the Eleventh Congress and the Commission at its fourteenth session. Consultations are under way with the regional commissions and the Secretariat regarding possible dates and venues. It is expected that the regional preparatory meetings will take place during the period from January to April 2004. The basic resources required for their organization have been included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, in accordance with resolutions 56/119 and 57/171.

E. Discussion guides

66. As the Commission has selected the substantive agenda items and the workshop topics, the Secretariat is proceeding with the preparation of the two discussion guides for the preparatory meetings and for the workshops, in cooperation with the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. The discussion guides will serve as the annotated provisional agenda for the preparatory meetings and for the workshops, outlining the main topics and the themes to be discussed. They are intended not only to focus on the different agenda items at the preparatory meetings and to stimulate discussion of issues of major concern, but also to identify policy options from a regional perspective for consideration by the Eleventh Congress, as well as to obtain relevant and updated information for inclusion in the working papers for the Congress.

F. Public information

67. It is expected that the Department of Public Information will continue its practice of undertaking public information activities prior to and during the

Congress itself. Those activities should have the following objectives: (a) to provide Governments and experts with information on the Eleventh Congress, especially with regard to the scope of the items of the provisional agenda; and (b) to create awareness among experts and the general public of the significance of actions taken by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the work of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The target audience of such activities will include government officials; specialists in criminal law and criminal justice; public administrators; parliamentarians; practitioners in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice; readers of periodicals and other publications specializing in penology and criminology; and officers and members of professional organizations, judges, law enforcement personnel and other pertinent professional groups. It should be emphasized that the public information activities should be undertaken in a timely manner so as to ensure the fullest awareness and involvement of Governments and the public at large in such an important world event.

G. Documentation

68. It should be recalled that, pursuant to paragraph 2 (j) of General Assembly resolution 56/119, the Commission, as the preparatory body for the Eleventh Congress, should request the Secretary-General to prepare only those background documents which are absolutely necessary for implementing the programme of work of the Congress. Accordingly, the Commission, at its twelfth session, made specific recommendations on the number, content, style and timing of documentation for the Congress, in particular, the discussion guide for the regional preparatory meetings, their reports and the working papers on the main topics of the Congress, as well as national papers and submissions by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and institutes.

69. The Commission recommended that the basic documentation for the Eleventh Congress consist of the following: (a) working papers on each of the four substantive items of the provisional agenda, drawing on the results of the regional preparatory meetings, the recommendations of the Commission and contributions made by experts; (b) reports of the regional preparatory meetings; and (c) a limited number of documents prepared by the Secretariat that are relevant to the discussion of the agenda items, such as reports of expert group meetings and other specialized studies on specific issues. In addition, background documents will also be before the Congress, including reports prepared by other United Nations entities and institutes, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as contributions by individual experts on the roster of the Secretariat, dealing with specific questions in their area of expertise. Particular attention will be given to national papers or reports submitted by Governments. Following past practice, the Secretariat will provide information on the format, languages and submission of such reports.

IX. Concluding remarks

70. The additional proposals provided in response to the Secretary-General's request for views of 1 October 2002 by Member States, entities of the United

Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerning the agenda items for the plenary sessions and topics for the workshops were of assistance to the Commission in finalizing the provisional agenda for the Congress. In response to General Assembly resolution 57/171, the Commission, at its twelfth session, made a number of recommendations touching on substantive and organizational matters relating to the Congress, as reflected in the draft resolution recommended for approval by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Assembly. At its thirteenth session, the Commission is expected to accord sufficient time to reviewing the progress made in the preparations for the Congress, to finalize in good time all the necessary organizational and substantive arrangements and to make its recommendations, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 10 and corrigendum (E/2002/30 and Corr.1).*

² *Ibid.*, chap. VII.

³ Formerly known as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1137, No. 17828.

⁵ E/CN.15/2003/11 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2.

⁶ E/CN.15/2003/L.8/Rev.1.

⁷ See A/CONF.156.



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Item 41 (b) of the preliminary list*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

**Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2003**

Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003

Item 9 of the provisional agenda**

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The year under review saw the continuation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, with hundreds of victims on both sides. Tight internal and external closures, widespread curfews, incursions and other measures taken by the Israeli military led to a further worsening of economic indicators and to an increase in poverty and unemployment levels among Palestinians. The capacity of the Palestinian Authority was diminished just as needs increased. The central challenge facing authorities and the international community was how to meet growing emergency and humanitarian needs at the same time as maintaining medium and longer-term objectives.

The United Nations system continued to work hard to maintain Palestinian capacities to provide essential services, to repair damage to infrastructure and to meet urgent needs. However, the planning, management and implementation of projects were hampered by restrictions placed on United Nations staff, notably locally recruited Palestinian staff, a deteriorating security environment and problems of access. This often required re-gearing of programmes and a shift in emphasis from development to emergency activity.

The present report outlines the efforts made by the United Nations system, in cooperation with Palestinian and donor counterparts, in order to support the Palestinian civilian population under extremely difficult circumstances.

* A/58/50/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

** E/2003/100.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/147 of 16 December 2002 on assistance to the Palestinian people, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period from June 2002 to May 2003.

2. It should be noted that information concerning the living conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in separate, periodic reports prepared by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority (UNSCO). In addition, a separate report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan (A/58/75-E/2003/21), provides detailed information on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, including the current crisis situation. The annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides information, *inter alia*, on the socio-economic conditions of the registered refugee population in the occupied Palestinian territory.¹

3. Throughout the period under review, the United Nations Special Coordinator has maintained his efforts to fulfil the mandate of his office, including ensuring effective coordination between the relevant institutions of the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations and the international community, as well as documenting the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory.

II. Overview of the current crisis

A. Background

4. Since the outbreak of the violence in September 2000, more than 2,500 Palestinians and 700 Israelis have lost their lives, while many more have been wounded on both sides. This has been the result of, on the one hand, terrorist attacks against Israelis by various Palestinian factions and, on the other hand, extensive retaliatory operations, pre-emptive strikes and attacks on suspected militants by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as well as violence perpetrated by settlers.

5. In view of the continued cycle of violence and the complete impasse between Israel and the Palestinians, the international community took the lead in proposing a way out of the current crisis. On 30 April 2003, the Quartet (composed of the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation) formally presented to the parties its road map,² a plan that proposes parallel steps to be taken by both sides to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and end the occupation that began in 1967, by realizing the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

B. Humanitarian and socio-economic crisis

6. As observed in August 2002 by the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General, Catherine Bertini, the proximate cause of the Palestinian humanitarian and economic crises has been Israel's systematic imposition of severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian goods and people across borders and within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This strict closure policy has effectively divided the occupied Palestinian territory into approximately 50 isolated pockets. Furthermore, the residents of these areas have frequently been obliged to live under sustained curfews imposed by IDF, often for many days or weeks at a time.

7. The policy of systematic closures led to a four-fold crisis. First, the Palestinian economy shrunk dramatically, resulting in widespread unemployment and poverty, which lowered average incomes and limited the ability of Palestinians to purchase basic commodities and services. Secondly, access to services was severely limited owing to the restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement. Thirdly, damage to many public facilities and the severe fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority resulted in mounting difficulties in maintaining the provision of services. Lastly, movement restrictions also hampered the ability of international organizations such as the United Nations and aid agencies to reach their target populations so as to provide much needed humanitarian relief. Efforts to adapt to these movement restrictions led to an increase in the cost of humanitarian aid delivery.

8. Owing to internal closures, access to health-care services, which are mainly located in cities, was severely curtailed. These limitations were particularly threatening to patients who required regular follow-up and treatment for chronic conditions. Food security was also severely affected. Per capita food consumption declined by 30 per cent in the past two years. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) reported that approximately one in every four women and children under five years of age suffered from mild anaemia, while 15.3 per cent of children under five years of age and 6.1 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 suffered from moderate anaemia. Many schools were unable to operate for extended periods during curfews. According to the World Bank, 170,000 children and over 6,650 teachers were unable to reach their regular classrooms and at least 580 schools were closed owing to curfews, closures and home confinement.

9. Dramatic increases in unemployment and poverty were seen throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. According to a World Bank report entitled "Two Years of Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment", published in March 2003, 60 per cent of the population of the West Bank and Gaza lived under a poverty line of US\$ 2 per day, up from 20 per cent in 1999. The numbers of the poor tripled from 637,000 in September 2000 to nearly 2 million in March 2003 and gross national income per capita fell to nearly half of what it was two years ago. More than 50 per cent of the work force was unemployed and more than half of Palestinians were receiving some form of donor-financed food assistance.

10. Private sector activity, the engine of economic growth, also suffered severely as a result of declining incomes and failing demand, political uncertainty and the impact of closures and violence. According to the Palestinian Federation of Industries, by July 2002, 17 per cent of all businesses in the occupied Palestinian territory had shut down and only 7 per cent were operating at pre-crisis levels.

About a third of all businesses encountered serious debt service problems. Between June 2000 and June 2002, Palestinian exports declined by almost a half and imports by a third. Investment shrunk from an estimated \$1.5 billion in 1999 to only \$140 million in 2002. Overall income losses in the first two years of the conflict reached \$5.4 billion, the equivalent of one full year of national income prior to the crisis. Agricultural production also seriously declined. The construction of a "separation wall" by the Government of Israel, which began in late summer 2002, was expected to reduce farmers' access to their land further and therefore represents yet a new form of closure. If the closure policy persists, the private sector is expected to experience further decline, with serious long-term structural consequences. In addition to the losses incurred on various levels owing to closure, physical damage resulting from IDF incursions and attacks amounted to losses of \$728 million by the end of August 2002, including substantial damage to agricultural systems, infrastructure, public buildings and private houses. Extensive damage was caused to dwellings and the household effects of thousands of families in the occupied Palestinian territory. In April-May 2002, a donor-led damage assessment estimated the number of damaged and destroyed private and refugee housing units to be over 40,000.

C. Palestinian Authority fiscal situation

11. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that the fiscal position of the Palestinian Authority was precarious and that it remained highly dependent on external budget support to pay civil servant salaries and to deliver key services. As a result of rising unemployment, reduced demand, increased difficulties in tax collection and the continued withholding by the Government of Israel of taxes collected on the Palestinian Authority's behalf, monthly revenues dropped from \$91 million in late 2000 to \$19 million in March 2003. A collapse of the Palestinian Authority was avoided by donor budget support, which totalled \$1.1 billion over the last two years. The recent resumption of tax revenue transfers by the Government of Israel was a positive development and allowed the Ministry of Finance to present, for the first time, a consolidated budget for 2003 to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). On 1 February 2003, PLC approved the 2003 budget of the Palestinian Authority. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee noted that, even assuming the newly reinstated regular monthly revenue transfers by Israel, continued budget support from donors at a level of \$44.6 million per month, for a total of \$535 million in 2003, was necessary to ensure that the budget was fully funded and arrears were settled.

III. United Nations response to the crisis

A. United Nations development assistance

12. Upon the outbreak of violence in September 2000 and the further worsening of the humanitarian situation owing to the Israeli incursions in April 2002, the United Nations system in the occupied Palestinian territory faced the challenge of rapidly adapting its activities and assistance to respond to the growing socio-economic crisis and emergency needs on the ground. This required the adoption of a two-track strategy that comprised both emergency humanitarian assistance and the

continuation, whenever and however possible, of ongoing development programmes. Some long-term development activities were postponed or cancelled, as priority had to be given to emergency activities. Despite the difficult working conditions, however, many development initiatives continued and these are discussed briefly below, according to the sectors defined by the Palestinian Authority in its Palestinian Development Plan.

Infrastructure and natural resources management

13. During the reporting period, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued its technical assistance and infrastructure support to local government in microregions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the area of environmental conservation, UNDP and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) continued to work together to preserve the wetlands in the Gaza Strip. The programme to clean up the wetlands of Wadi Gaza and turn them into a nature reserve is scheduled to be completed by July 2003. With \$7.8 million from the Government of Japan, UNDP initiated a project to develop a storm-water drainage system in the southern Gaza Strip in order to alleviate damage caused during the rainy season. Environmental health services provided by UNRWA to the refugee camp population included sewage disposal, management of storm-water runoff, provision of safe drinking water, collection and disposal of refuse and control of insect and rodent infestation. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) prepared a desk study on the state of the environment in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Institutional capacity-building

14. UNDP played an important role in the Palestinian Authority reform efforts. Thanks to start-up support and technical assistance provided through UNDP and other donors, the Palestinian Central Elections Commission has been established and is functioning. UNDP also allocated funds for reform of local government and initiated a diagnostic study to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local government system. Within the financial domain, UNDP provided support to reform the internal audit capacity of the Palestinian Authority in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and the General Control Institute.

15. The four-year Assistance to the Palestinian People programme of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) consists of three subprogrammes, namely Reproductive Health, Population and Development Strategies, and Advocacy. Under its Population and Development Strategies subprogramme, UNFPA assisted Bir Zeit University in developing curricula for a multidisciplinary graduate course on population and development. Furthermore, UNFPA launched a project to strengthen the capacity of PCBS, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to promote connectivity between various elements of the statistical system. Progress was also achieved to integrate population communication concepts into the curricula of the Mass Communication Department at An-Najah University. With UNFPA support, PCBS launched a programme on population research and training of decision makers and middle managers on utilization of census and survey data. The contribution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to this sector included an independent mission to evaluate the Palestinian News Agency, WAFA.

16. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was able to complete phase I of the Customs Administration capacity-building project and achieved progress in four other ongoing technical assistance projects: support for small and medium-sized enterprise development; strengthening capacities in debt-monitoring and financial analysis; strengthening trade efficiency and strengthening trade policies and strategies.

17. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was in the process of concluding its technical assistance programme to the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU). This included capacity-building at the regional level and skills training at the local level and strengthening PGFTU training centres. Through its Better Skills for a Better Future project, ILO aimed to improve the quality of information technology skills by equipping computer training centres at Ministry of Labour vocational training centres in Ramallah, Jenin and Khan Younis. During the period under review, UNEP support allowed various Palestinian ministers and professionals to attend international conferences related to environmental issues in their respective sectors.

Human resources and social development

18. In the education sector, the single largest area of UNRWA activity, the Agency's expenditure in 2002 in the occupied Palestinian territory was \$84.4 million. The UNRWA education programme represents the Agency's chief investment in the human resources of Palestine refugee youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, despite progress in the construction and upgrading of Agency schools, lack of funds and sites for school construction meant that many schools continued to be accommodated in unsatisfactory rented premises and suffered from overcrowding. Through its Vocational and Technical Training Centres, the Agency provided skills training programmes for youth, in-service teacher training and pre-service teacher training, leading, during the 2002-2003 school year, to a first university degree for 2,596 trainees, of which over 1,000 were women. The UNDP Palestinian Schoolnet Project launched an educational Internet portal in May 2002 and established 20 computer centres in schools throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. UNESCO continued its project aimed at providing financial assistance to some 55 Palestinian students for university studies abroad.

19. In the health sector, UNRWA operated 51 health facilities, which provided comprehensive primary health care, handling 3.3 million patient visits in 2002. In addition, the Agency provided maternal health care through six maternity units integrated within its health centres in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA expenditure in 2002 for its health programme in the occupied Palestinian territory was \$25.1 million. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) focused on safeguarding important public health investments, such as child immunization campaigns. UNFPA activities in this sector included supporting provision of quality reproductive services and counselling in 48 health facilities through a comprehensive training programme for some 100 health personnel. Through a joint UNFPA/UNICEF initiative to improve adolescent lives, a plan of action was put together with the Ministry of Health to integrate reproductive health and gender concepts in the curricula of the 9th and 10th grades. UNFPA and the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) Fund for International Development, together with the Ministry, launched a joint project for prevention and management of HIV/AIDS in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In cooperation with the Ministry, the World Health Organization

(WHO) finalized the essential drug list now used as a basis for drug procurement. WHO further continued functioning as the secretariat of the Health Sector Working Group. Within the same donors-Palestinian Authority coordination framework, thematic subgroups on nutrition, mental health, health management information and reproductive health were established. WHO implemented activities in the area of nutrition, including the development of a nutritional and epidemiological surveillance system, and its Food Safety Initiative involved conducting training courses on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System. The Brucellosis Control Project, implemented by WHO and UNDP with the relevant ministries, entered its final stages. The organization's Mental Health Programme included developing long-term mental health policy and legislation and an emergency project involving the support of community mental health centres. WHO was also engaged in its Decentralized Cooperation project, which involved linking communities in donor countries with communities in the developing world.

20. During the reporting period, UNDP published the Palestinian Poverty Report and the Human Development Report for 2002 and launched the Millennium Development Goals Report for the occupied Palestinian territory.

Human rights and women

21. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights began its current two-year project in August 2002. This project included support for the rule of law in the form of human rights education. The Office conducted a number of training courses, such as four lawyer courses, one course on human rights for prison guards at the Gaza Central Prison and two human rights courses for Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation staff and Palestinian journalists. It supported and organized the visit of two staff of the Palestinian Legislative Council to South Africa and the development of guidelines on arrest and detention and the use of force and firearms for the Palestinian police. It continued its Assisting Communities Together (ACT) project to support grass-roots initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights by means of small grant projects provided jointly by the Office and UNDP. UNICEF supported activities designed to promote the peaceful and non-violent participation of children and youth in the social and cultural life of the occupied Palestinian territory through summer camps, sports activities and youth forums. UNFPA worked to enhance further the capacity of three women's centres in reproductive health and psychosocial and legal counselling.

Productive sectors

22. UNDP continued its active support for rural and economic development. Approximately \$5.8 million in new projects in land reclamation and integrated rural development were initiated during the reporting period. In August 2002, UNDP launched a project to improve the economic stability of Bedouin communities in the West Bank and a project to revitalize the handicraft industry in the Bethlehem district. Under the UNDP employment generation scheme, \$3 million were allocated to restore and rehabilitate cultural heritage sites damaged in the conflict. To help alleviate poverty, a component of the UNFPA economic empowerment project was introduced, whereby disadvantaged women and their families were trained on managing small businesses and received loans or grants. WHO launched its Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Initiative for the purpose of working towards the implementation of the WHO GMP standard. ILO proposed the creation of a

Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. Its role would be to design and deliver efficient and effective solutions to aid the growth of social and human capital, support the development of the Palestinian business community and create job opportunities that address the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population.

23. In October 2002, UNESCO carried out a cultural heritage mission to finalize the plan of action for the Conservation Master Plan for Bethlehem. Two more cultural heritage missions were dispatched to Nablus at the end of 2002 for the project on technical assistance for the rehabilitation of the Khan Al-Wakalat caravanserai.

B. United Nations assistance emergency focus

Infrastructure and natural resources management

24. UNRWA continued implementation of its Jenin Rehabilitation Project, which includes reconstruction of the homes of 419 families that were demolished in the refugee camp during the Israeli military incursion in April 2002. Furthermore, by the end of February 2003, UNRWA had provided financial assistance to 3,134 families to repair minor damage to their homes. The rebuilding of sections of the camp destroyed in April 2002 and of homes damaged in subsequent IDF incursions was seriously hampered by closures, curfews and Israeli military operations. In spite of these obstacles, removal of all debris was completed by the end of March 2003. WHO provided the engineering consultancy to assess the condition of the infrastructure in the camp and to prepare a feasibility study and cost estimates for any new and remedial work needed to ensure a reliable water supply and drainage system. The assessment of water and waste-water networks began on 20 February 2003.

25. In the Gaza Strip, since the beginning of the crisis in September 2000, a total of 1,083 shelters belonging to 1,098 refugee families (7,466 persons) were destroyed or damaged beyond repair as a result of Israeli military actions. Some 1,165 additional shelters sustained various degrees of repairable damage. In response, UNRWA in Gaza reconstructed, or is in the process of reconstructing, 983 dwellings. Further repairs on 1,110 shelters were either finished or under way. Between 1 May 2002 and 31 March 2003, UNRWA offered financial assistance totalling \$1,030,446 to 141 families to reconstruct their dwellings that were destroyed in the West Bank (excluding Jenin). Financial assistance amounting to \$274,853 went to another 102 families whose dwellings sustained major structural damage. A total of 6,520 families received grants totalling \$2,707,232 to carry out minor repairs to their homes.

Emergency support to key sectors

26. UNRWA addressed the challenges presented by curfews and closures to its educational programmes by conducting remedial classes for 60,000 children in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the Agency's ability to mount effective and sustained emergency education interventions was undercut by a regime of closure that restricted movement to a much greater degree than in the Gaza Strip. There were 9,708 students in the West Bank attending remedial education classes as of 31 March 2003, while 7,879 students took part in extra-curricular activities during the

summer of 2002. The UNICEF response to the education emergency also focused on ensuring that as many children as possible had the opportunity to continue learning, even if they could not reach their schools owing to closure and curfew. To this end, UNICEF supported alternative education projects and the "back to school" campaign to ensure that 1 million Palestinian children would be back in school by September 2002.

27. UNRWA emergency interventions in the health sector included the provision of mobile medical teams and enhancing the capacity of emergency and casualty care systems. UNRWA also established a community-based programme for providing counselling and psychological support to vulnerable population groups in the West Bank with special emphasis on youth and children. UNRWA assistance to refugees sustaining physically disabling injuries took the form of physiotherapy, prostheses, training and modifications to housing to enhance physical mobility. UNDP provided emergency funding for health sector medical equipment, supplies and training. Given the grave consequences of restricted access for women in labour, UNFPA continued a community-based emergency obstetric care programme, whereby training was provided to 160 health personnel in maternal and newborn care. Medical equipment and supplies, essential obstetric drugs and contraceptives were procured by UNFPA. The UNICEF response to the increased psychosocial distress among Palestinian children included the training of school counsellors, kindergarten teachers and social workers, while UNDP was in the process of establishing three district-level psychological counselling centres. With UNFPA support, psychosocial counselling was provided to women and their families through three model women health centres, and to youth and adolescents within the school health and counselling programmes. WHO supported the establishment of the Health Inform, aimed at supporting decision-making capacities of the health sector working groups and focusing on the collection of health data. WHO provided the Ministry of Health with logistic support for the transportation of medicines and vaccines and continued to provide customs clearance support to United Nations agencies and the Ministry.

28. The World Food Programme (WFP) approved, in May 2002, its emergency operation programme, the objective of which is to cover the increased food requirements of the non-refugee population affected by the current humanitarian crisis. In addition, in 2003 WFP began a supplementary feeding programme for 6,145 malnourished children and their families in the Gaza Strip and the southern West Bank. WFP was also providing 11,190 metric tons of foodstuffs to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to assist 180,000 hardship cases in the rural areas of the West Bank. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in close technical cooperation with WFP, UNDP/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and UNRWA, assisted in the drafting of the Food Security Strategy for the Humanitarian Action Plan for 2003. The overall objective of this plan was to prevent deterioration in the nutritional situation of the population and a collapse of the agriculture-based household economy.

29. Although its technical assistance is mainly geared to addressing institutional capacity needs, in the last quarter of 2002 UNCTAD initiated joint efforts with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee (PARC) to support the livelihood of Palestinian farmers. The objective was to assist Palestinian farmers to market their large surplus of olive oil through international trade and targeted market access.

Human rights and women

30. UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF formed an advocacy group on health to promote easy access to health care for the Palestinian population. UNFPA helped the Ministry of Health to produce a documentary on the adverse impact of the closures on access of women in labour to hospitals and for safeguarding reproductive rights of Palestinians. Furthermore, the group assisted PCBS in assessing the impact of the construction of the Israeli "separation wall" and the resulting displacement of populations. Through a UNFPA initiative, participants from four Palestinian women's NGOs were trained in Bratislava on effective techniques to promote gender concerns in emergencies and post-conflict situations.

Emergency support to productive sectors

31. Since September 2000, UNDP has mobilized over \$100 million for its Emergency Response Programme, designed to provide humanitarian assistance and alleviate economic hardship, mainly through labour-intensive, employment-generating infrastructure projects. Major projects initiated by UNDP include projects to restore damaged public and private infrastructure in towns and refugee camps, as well as health-care infrastructure, employment generation through restoration of damaged historical sites and the "Tashghil" project, designed to create jobs by developing and improving social and agricultural infrastructure and cultural heritage sites. UNDP also launched a multicomponent humanitarian assistance project designed to reactivate local markets by buying local products for food distribution.

32. WFP implemented its Food-For-Work and Food-For-Training schemes wherever possible in order to sustain agriculture and food production in the current conditions. A total of 17,500 families were participating in community works that include terracing, rehabilitation of agricultural land, rural access roads and water systems, home gardens and rehabilitation of schools and clinics. Furthermore, with the goal of providing vital support to 1,600 poor farmers, WFP purchased locally and redistributed 272 metric tons of olive oil, the main local agricultural produce. As part of its response to worsening levels of poverty among refugees, UNRWA expanded the number of short-term employment opportunities, with an emphasis on the Gaza Strip. By the end of March 2003, over 272,000 individuals had benefited from this programme since its inception in January 2001. UNCTAD initiated joint efforts with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and PARC, to support the livelihood of Palestinian farmers by assisting them to market their large surplus of olive oil.

C. Coordination

33. UNSCO provided support to United Nations programmes and agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, both those with representation in the field and those based abroad. UNSCO convened the monthly United Nations coordination meeting, which was the principal forum for coordination of United Nations development assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory. During the reporting period, eight such meetings were held with the participation of 12 agencies working in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

34. On 12 November 2002, UNSCO organized the annual United Nations inter-agency meeting to provide the United Nations and assistance community with the opportunity to review the findings of the report entitled: "Humanitarian Plan of Action for the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The meeting served as an opportunity for discussion among the wider aid community about a strategic response to the humanitarian aspects of the current crisis. The meeting, which was also attended by the Palestinian Authority, identified further work that needs to be undertaken in the following areas: (i) development of a strategic approach to humanitarian needs; (ii) strengthening the coordination structure with emphasis on the Palestinian Authority's leading role; (iii) creation of an access tracking device in terms of delivery and utilization of assistance; and (iv) integration of advocacy into humanitarian work. Within the wider donor coordination framework, UNSCO continued to represent the United Nations system in various donor bodies aimed at strengthening the programmatic and advisory role of the United Nations, particularly in facilitating Palestinian Authority-donor relationships.

35. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs established five field offices with a view to supporting local coordination and priority-setting. Through its field offices and the establishment of the Humanitarian Information Centre, the Office provided extensive and relevant information on the humanitarian situation and tracked issues which affect the situation, such as closures and curfews, house demolitions and access problems. The Centre also hosted an incident tracking system, which assisted the United Nations and other partners in their dealings with the Israeli authorities. The Office further compiled information and data on the humanitarian crisis with a view to raising awareness and respect for international humanitarian law and facilitating sustainable solutions to the crisis.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

36. Since 2000, the donor community rapidly adapted its activities to respond to the socio-economic and humanitarian consequences of the crisis, without losing sight of medium and long-term development programmes. While donor commitments increased in 2002, the ratio of development assistance to emergency and budgetary assistance shifted from 7:1 in 2000 to 1:5 in 2002. Although overall commitments increased by 57 per cent in the period, development assistance declined by 70 per cent, while emergency and budgetary assistance increased by a factor of 10. During the reporting period, international community support focused on Palestinian Authority institutional reform efforts, direct support to the Palestinian Authority budget and on mitigating the impact of the economic and social crisis.

A. Support to Palestinian reform

37. In response to the publication of the 100-day Plan of Reform by the Palestinian Authority, in July 2002 the Quartet established the Task Force on Palestinian Reform in order to monitor and support implementation of Palestinian civil reforms and guide the international donor community in its support for the Palestinians reform agenda. This has resulted in significant technical and programmatic donor support in all reform areas. The Task Force worked with Palestinians to develop the Reform Action Plan, which highlighted Palestinian commitments, established

benchmarks, identified obstacles to reform and proposed areas for donor assistance. It conducted its activities through seven Reform Support Groups in the areas of civil society, elections, financial accountability, judicial and rule of law reform, market economics, local government and public administration and civil service reform.

38. In its meeting in London on 20 February 2003, the Task Force recognized that the ongoing conflict, continued restrictions on freedom of movement of persons and goods, deterioration of the humanitarian situation and destruction of local infrastructure and facilities constituted a significant hindrance to reforms. Noting the difficult security situation, it welcomed the clear and considerable progress made in several areas of Palestinian civil reform, in particular, the implementation of significantly higher standards of fiscal transparency and accountability, as well as work towards development of the public institutions and laws needed to promote a market economy. The Task Force also welcomed the decision of the Government of Israel to resume monthly transfers of Palestinian tax revenues, which permitted the Ministry of Finance to submit a fully financed budget for 2003.

39. The Task Force commended efforts to develop appropriate legislation and to coordinate economic policy with Palestinian business leaders. It also noted the considerable progress made in public administration and civil service reform but observed that progress in some areas, such as judicial reform, had been much slower. While acknowledging Israel's legitimate security concerns, there was consensus in the Task Force that mobility restrictions constituted a major impediment to reform, slowing progress and undermining the credibility of the reform process in many areas.

B. Emergency support

40. *Budgetary support.* According to IMF, Palestinian Authority average monthly expenditures dropped from \$107 million prior to the crisis to \$82 million in the first half of 2002. Non-wage expenditures accounted for only \$24 million in mid-2002. This was relieved somewhat in late 2002 with the emergency services support programme, which, from September 2002 to February 2003, provided an average of \$5.5 million per month for non-salary expenditures. Of the total international support in 2002, 56 per cent of the international commitments (and 60 per cent of the disbursement) went to budgetary support of the Palestinian Authority and municipalities. However, international budgetary support remained below what was needed. While the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee estimated the budgetary support needs for 2002 to be \$876 million, actual disbursement was only \$450 million. Palestinian Authority budgetary support from donors was not allocated formally to any particular public expenditure line; however, it provided 53 per cent of the Palestinian Authority's cash expenditures in the 2002 budget and ensured that its top fiscal priority — the payment of salaries — could be met. (Donors effectively financed some 75,000 staff and their families, in total, 480,000 people.) For the first time since its establishment, the Palestinian Authority published a detailed general budget for 2003. The budget aimed to eliminate any financing gap in 2003 and to clear the Palestinian Authority's debt, thereby restoring its credibility with the private sector, while providing a major stimulus to the recovery of commercial activity. For this to succeed, two things were needed: continued regular transfers by the Israeli Government of withheld tax revenues and continued donor budgetary support.

41. *Non-budgetary support.* Representatives at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, held in Oslo in April 2002, noted the continued need for donor support in basic service delivery, private sector support, employment and welfare and physical reconstruction. Assistance in these areas needed to strike a balance — to the extent possible — between responding to emergency needs and the medium-term development priorities, while avoiding the creation of habitual dependencies. As the World Bank's economic assessment showed, support in all of the areas fell significantly short of the needs estimated by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. The \$921 million needed translated to the disbursement of \$329 million. In terms of basic service delivery, of the needed \$219 million, \$94 million were disbursed. The private sector received \$19 million of the needed \$75 million. Of the \$327 million needed for employment and welfare, \$151 million were actually disbursed. In terms of physical reconstruction, while the needs were estimated at \$300 million, the disbursement was \$65 million. The discrepancy between needs and actual disbursements was due to a number of factors. In some cases, donor institutional priorities affected the disbursement, while in others, the unavailability of funds and competing priorities caused the shortfall. Furthermore, in areas such as physical reconstruction, the Palestinian Authority and the donors were reluctant to repair infrastructure that could well be damaged again in the near future. According to the Palestinian Emergency and Public Investment Plan, issued in January 2003, priority areas requiring support in 2003 were job creation, cash and food assistance, health and environmental health, education and social services.

C. Donor coordination

42. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met again in London on 18 and 19 February 2003. It focused on the socio-economic and humanitarian situation, the fiscal situation, Palestinian reform, challenges to the assistance community and strategies for 2003. Committee members reaffirmed their commitment to restoring the capacity of the Palestinian Authority at the national and municipal levels to deliver basic services and provide law and order and agreed to work to recreate the conditions of normal economic life. Israel's cooperation in easing restrictions on the movement of goods and people and facilitating and safeguarding the work of the donor community were seen as central to these objectives. While the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting was not a formal pledging conference, a number of donors announced financial contributions to meet immediate needs. Emergency needs for 2003 total approximately \$2 billion. Of this, donors have pledged to disburse \$1.2 billion during the course of the year.

43. The reporting period saw considerable discussion as to how coordination could be strengthened. This resulted, *inter alia*, in agreement to rationalize reporting arrangements under the Quartet and to establish a Humanitarian and Emergency Policy Group as an organ of the Local Aid Coordination Committee. There was consensus between the Palestinian Authority and donors that sectoral coordination needed to be simplified in the light of the emergency and discussions on the subject have been scheduled with the new Palestinian Authority Government. Operational coordination on the field level has also been strengthened and has profited from the newly established presence of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

V. Challenges ahead

A. Securing access and protection

44. Since the start of the intifada, in September 2000, the issue of access continued to be of critical concern to the international aid organizations. During the reporting period, Israel placed serious obstacles in the path of the international community's efforts at effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian and emergency assistance. Access to locations within the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not afforded on a uniform and reliable basis. Entire areas are and have been inaccessible for months at a time. Fixed roadblocks and manned checkpoints delay movement and the security of staff and goods is increasingly under threat owing to disregard by Israel Defense Forces troops of the right of access and their failure to recognize the symbols of international organizations. This was most tragically exemplified by the death of UNRWA staff member Ian Hook in Jenin on 22 November 2002.

45. My Humanitarian Envoy, Ms. Bertini, during her mission in August 2002, obtained from the Government of Israel several commitments that represent a minimum and specific set of humanitarian standards. The commitments were delivered in the context of health, water, immunities commonly enjoyed by international organizations and fishing rights. Reporting on the established benchmarks shows little progress so far. Consistent delays of ambulances at checkpoints continue, with patients in critical condition facing denial of access on a regular basis and medical staff often coming under fire; localities under curfew experience difficulties in receiving water tanks; the Gaza fishing zone has not been extended to 12 nautical miles. The United Nations will continue to track Israeli adherence to and compliance with the commitments submitted to the Bertini mission.

46. In these difficult circumstances, the Task Force on Project Implementation has played a useful role in enhancing the effectiveness of donor assistance. Particularly at the operational level, there has been some improvement in obtaining mobility of national staff. Moreover, the Israeli authorities have decentralized and strengthened their liaison system throughout the West Bank and have made additional staff available to resolve incidents and coordinate movement. Despite the progress achieved, outstanding issues remain. The Task Force has been unable to engage its Israeli interlocutors in a serious policy dialogue on how to enhance access and guarantee protection of its staff and goods without endangering Israeli security. It has been equally unable to initiate a dialogue on how to enhance the movement and security of project staff and aid beneficiaries. In order to overcome these constraints, the Task Force will maintain its emphasis on a dual-level approach — policy and operational — in pursuing its mandate, but at the same time will engage high-level bodies such as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and the Quartet to take on access and security-related issues also.

B. Maintaining the development agenda

47. Since the outbreak of the intifada, decreased revenues and severe mobility restrictions have led to a severe drop in the reliability and quality of Palestinian Authority service delivery, especially at the municipal level. Islamic welfare organizations have become relatively more important in meeting urgent needs.

Palestinian Authority ministries have been compelled to respond to the immediate humanitarian crisis, leaving little or no capacity for strategic planning. The challenge for the Palestinian Authority has been and remains to restore public confidence in national institutions, which requires reliable service delivery, while developing a more strategic outlook. Reforms under way in the financial field, moves initiated to develop a transparent national public investment strategy and the establishment of a separate Ministry for Planning are promising steps in the right direction. The challenge for donors has been and remains to balance their responsibility to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs, while continuing efforts to support long-term development and institutional capacity-building. Should a successful political process lead to the lifting of mobility and other restrictions, the economic situation could improve rapidly and the international community and the Palestinian Authority have to be ready to shift priorities quickly and accordingly. The United Nations and the donor community must explore ways in which to support Palestinian Authority planning, aid coordination, management and delivery capacity to meet immediate needs, while laying the basis for an economically viable Palestinian State, one in which the private sector can thrive as the engine of growth and internationally funded public investment is strategically deployed.

VI. Conclusions

48. In the past year, the humanitarian and socio-economic crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory reached unprecedented levels. We have seen a dramatic reduction in the capacity of Palestinians to manage their own affairs and a growing dependency upon aid — budgetary, technical and humanitarian. The challenge ahead is how to meet urgent needs without undermining — and if possible by strengthening — the prospects for a viable Palestinian State. A critical objective must be to restore the depleted administrative, financial and service delivery capacities of the Palestinian Authority, while continuing to meet emergency requirements.

49. Meeting the immediate challenges requires full respect by the parties for their obligations under international humanitarian law. They must make every effort to facilitate the work of United Nations agencies and partners in the donor and aid communities. I call especially upon the Government of Israel to take immediate steps to lift restrictions, to revive the economy, restore Palestinian livelihoods and facilitate the work of the assistance community, including improving the freedom of movement of aid workers and beneficiaries.

50. The far-reaching efforts of the donors to provide financial assistance for the humanitarian agencies and to support the Palestinian Authority's budget are to be commended and must continue. I call upon the international community to provide the necessary resources for the assistance programmes for the Palestinian people. I would draw particular attention to the latest emergency appeal of UNRWA, which provides vital services for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

51. While international assistance can alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, only a comprehensive political settlement, which leads to the end of the occupation, can provide a real solution to the humanitarian and

economic crisis faced by growing numbers of people in the West Bank and Gaza. Such a solution is offered in the Quartet's road map presented to the parties on 30 April, which calls for parallel steps addressing security, economic, humanitarian and political issues that will facilitate the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

52. The United Nations system will continue to work within the Quartet and with the donor community, as well as the parties, to achieve a political solution through the implementation of the road map and to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

Notes

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/57/13).

² See S/2003/529, annex.



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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report addresses the theme of "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and the transition from relief to development".

The report examines some of the key humanitarian developments and challenges of the past year. Some of the issues addressed relate to the protection of civilians, internally displaced persons, contingency planning, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies. The report then provides a detailed analysis of the two main themes of the report and addresses the major challenges faced in the context of the transition from relief to development and humanitarian financing.

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Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to the requests contained in Assembly resolution 57/153 of 16 December 2002 and Council resolution 2002/32 of 26 July 2002 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

I. Humanitarian situation, 2002-2003

Humanitarian developments and challenges

2. Developments in the humanitarian environment during the past year have been mixed. There are positive indications — albeit to varying degrees — that long-standing conflicts in Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Sierra Leone and the Sudan might be moving towards resolution. However, there has also been a re-emergence of conflict in Liberia and an outbreak of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, further complicating the situation in West Africa. In other parts of the world, including Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, protracted conflicts continue to deepen the humanitarian suffering of civilians. Most recently, the attention of the world has been focused on the war in Iraq, where the importance of promoting principled interaction with the occupying Power has presented a key challenge to humanitarian coordination.

3. There has been an aggravation of the ravages of drought and food shortages in the Horn of Africa and southern Africa by human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), a development that has challenged the humanitarian aid community to rethink its approach to humanitarian emergencies exacerbated by the epidemic. In the area of natural disasters, improvements in operational tools need to be reinforced by greater cooperation between the international community and national and regional response actors so as to ensure better synergies in disaster management.

4. The humanitarian community continues to focus its response to these diverse crises around ensuring that assistance and protection are provided to affected populations in accordance with the humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. The ultimate goal is to ensure that durable solutions are found, thus setting the stage for sustainable development. This requires collaborative partnerships among the humanitarian community, Governments and local actors. The contribution of regional organizations to humanitarian assistance efforts is becoming increasingly important.

5. Ensuring that humanitarian staff are able to operate in safe and secure environments is one of the more prominent operational prerequisites of the successful delivery of humanitarian assistance. Secure humanitarian access needs to be coupled with adequate, flexible and predictable resources in order to ensure that humanitarian aid is timely, adequate and effective. Reliable information, heightened advocacy efforts and effective contingency planning, taking into account the

regional effects of crises, are also needed to support effective humanitarian assistance.

6. In the context of these humanitarian developments and challenges, a number of issues, such as the transition from relief to development, humanitarian financing, protection of civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies, would benefit from the attention of Member States. These and other key issues are discussed in the body of this report.

1. Protection of civilians

7. The protection of civilians in armed conflict continues to be a priority issue across the United Nations system. To a large extent, humanitarian crises are in fact crises of protection. Effective implementation of the principles of protection and international human rights and humanitarian standards requires strengthened coordination on a wide range of issues, including the proliferation of small arms and landmines, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, security, law and order, sexual exploitation of women and children in conflict, the rights and special needs of refugees and internally displaced persons and the restorative justice issues of impunity and property rights.

8. Pivotal to the protection of civilians in a number of current complex emergencies is the need to obtain unhindered and sustained access to populations in need. In both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, access to populations in need is severely limited, especially in areas controlled by rebels. (Currently, less than 30 per cent of Liberian territory is accessible to humanitarian workers.) In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, closures and curfews imposed by Israel in response to suicide bombings and other attacks continue to impact adversely on humanitarian access and the protection of civilians more generally. Despite assurances received from Israeli authorities, access remained difficult for humanitarian agencies. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has continued to deteriorate since the mission of the Secretary-General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy in August 2002. Restrictions on movement, the concomitant loss of access to services for the satisfaction of basic needs and the destruction of houses and other infrastructure serve to increase levels of civilian suffering. In the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation, the main focus has been on upholding the principle of voluntary return, especially for the 15,000 internally displaced persons still in camps in Ingushetia, on the need to allow access to registration for civilians who have sought refuge in Ingushetia, and on the need to protect civilians caught in the midst of the conflict in Chechnya itself.

9. In longer-term conflicts, the protection-of-civilians agenda offers the formula of collective framework agreements between the parties to the conflict and the international humanitarian community as a way of allowing safe and sustained access to those in need. Operation Lifeline Sudan, which provides an operational framework within which United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations in the Sudan may secure access to civilians impartially and equitably regardless of their location, provides a good model for such framework agreements. Even where such framework agreements exist, however, ensuring implementation and accountability of both State and non-State actors remains a challenge.

10. A series of regional workshops on the protection of civilians convened for southern Africa, South-East Asia and Europe identified their main protection

concerns, which were the need to separate civilians from armed elements and the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism initiatives on the protection of civilians. The intermingling of combatants with civilian communities is an increasingly urgent concern. During complex emergencies and the subsequent transition to peace, cooperation between neighbouring States in order to combat this problem can be vital, particularly in respect of the need for host countries to ensure that refugee camps are established at a sufficient distance from borders (in order to minimize the risks to civilians, to enhance safe humanitarian access and to facilitate security in the camps). The rise of terrorism and the range of counter-terrorism initiatives by Governments have generated a number of difficult protection issues. It is crucial that Member States respond to security threats in a manner that safeguards the rights of civilians and is in accordance with principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law. "Counter-terrorism" should not be used to justify the suppression of basic human rights.

2. Staff security

11. Safeguarding the security of humanitarian personnel remains a pivotal challenge to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners. The past year has witnessed a number of tragic losses of humanitarian staff, most notably in Liberia, with the murder in February 2003 of 3 Adventist Development and Relief Agency staff in the north and the disappearance in March of almost 200 United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members, of whom half remain unaccounted for. Four Red Cross volunteers were murdered this year in western Côte d'Ivoire; abductions of humanitarian workers have taken place in Chechnya; and humanitarian workers have been killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Equally tragic incidents have taken place in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan. These tragedies serve to illustrate the precariousness of the security environment often encountered by humanitarian staff and the dangers inherent in providing humanitarian assistance during conflict. It also reveals a disturbing trend of blatant disrespect for humanitarian work. Despite the strengthening of the United Nations security management system and the increased cooperation that is taking place between the United Nations and its non-governmental organization partners, little can be done when humanitarian personnel are sought out and specifically targeted by belligerents. It is therefore crucial that Governments and non-State actors provide stronger commitments to the humanitarian community so as to ensure that a climate of impunity does not prevail in such situations and that those responsible for attacks against humanitarian staff are promptly brought to justice.

3. Humanitarian and military relations

12. Since the early 1990s, military forces have become increasingly involved in humanitarian activities. This involvement in what traditionally has been seen as "humanitarian space" raises significant issues in respect of principles, as well as policy and operational questions. In response to this challenge, "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies" (MCDA Guidelines)¹ were developed and released in March 2003, after an intensive consultative process involving Member States, the United Nations and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). In recognition of the fact that the MCDA Guidelines address only one aspect of the

interface between the humanitarian community and the military, namely, the use of military and civil defence assets, IASC is examining how best to address the issue of guidance on the broader aspects of the civil-military relationship in humanitarian crises.

13. The issue of civil-military relations has been brought to the fore most recently in the context of Iraq, where there has been a need to balance the responsibilities, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,² of the Coalition Forces, as the occupying Power, against the traditional role of the United Nations and other organizations providing humanitarian assistance. An important development in this context was the endorsement and release by the Secretary-General in March 2003 of "General Guidance for Interaction between United Nations Personnel and Military and Civilian Representatives of the Occupying Power in Iraq" (General Guidance for Iraq).³ This document addresses the gap that has long been a crucial issue for United Nations humanitarian bodies and constitutes a significant step forward in terms of clarifying the parameters of the relationship on the ground.

4. Update on internally displaced persons

14. Nascent peace has created opportunities to substantially improve the lives of internally displaced persons in places as diverse as Afghanistan, Angola, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. In the wake of recent moves towards peace, large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees have returned home in each of these countries. Lack of access to land and inadequate property rights, however, pose a significant challenge to IDP, refugee and returnee protection and assistance in transitional settings. In many instances, land and property have been taken over by elites, military leaders or other ethnic groups, risking tension and jeopardizing the stability of peace processes. Inadequate property rights and insecure access to land can exacerbate a returnee's level of vulnerability. Women in traditional societies are particularly affected. The fact that they are often discriminated against in terms of inheritance rights and access to property and as a result are deprived of an economic base, leads to poverty for themselves and their children. More generally, returnees who have no certainty of sustained access to the same piece of land are unlikely to make investments to increase agricultural productivity and food security. An uncertain future may also encourage the migration of returnees to urban areas, where they become mired in extremely poor living conditions.

15. In many post-conflict cases, judicial institutions are often weak and unable to provide recourse. Angola, however, has in place a legal framework based on its Constitution, international legal instruments and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex) that is beginning to deal with some of the difficult issues surrounding protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons during transition. The Norms on the Resettlement and Return of Displaced Populations, along with their more detailed *reglamento*, specify the preconditions and social targets related to State administration, land, health, water, sanitation and education that must be achieved during resettlement and return. Originally crafted with support from the United Nations to address poor conditions in resettlement areas, these laws have continued to be useful during return and have framed discussion on the types of post-conflict assistance needed.

16. Nonetheless, as has been the case with the robust legal framework that exists in Colombia, implementation of the Norms has been inconsistent. Only about 50 per cent of IDP resettlements and 30 per cent of IDP returns are consistent with the preconditions specified. Part of the difficulty in achieving greater implementation has been a lack of government capacity at provincial, municipal and local levels. Support and funding for this type of capacity-building are frequently low, despite its critical role in the creation of sustainable conditions for return.

17. This challenge, like others associated with IDP protection and assistance in times of both emergency and transition, underscores the importance of a collaborative approach, given the global dimensions of internal displacement. The range of activities required to support and protect IDP populations, particularly in transition, are considerable — for example, establishing legal frameworks that secure property rights, supporting government capacity-building, restoring livelihoods and providing basic social services. The inter-agency Internal Displacement Unit, whose mandate was extended for the year 2003, supports country teams with the development of collaborative approaches in the field. Recently, the Unit has provided support in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq. It provides specialized advice to resident/humanitarian coordinators, develops common training and facilitates the development of strategies and agreed frameworks. The Unit and the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons are working to promote system-wide improvements in response; and the Unit is also pursuing efforts to develop parameters for a collaborative approach to help make IDP-related activities more predictable.

5. Gender mainstreaming

18. The need for greater integration of a gender perspective into emergency humanitarian assistance continues to be an important challenge confronting the United Nations, its humanitarian partners and Member States. IASC and its constituent members have developed a range of policies, strategies and guidelines aimed at ensuring that the issue of gender perspectives and the needs, priorities and experience of women and girls are consistently addressed by all personnel involved in humanitarian operations. The challenge remains of ensuring full implementation and utilization of those methods and tools. Concrete measures aimed at systematically integrating a gender perspective into the full range of emergency operations, from their initial stages, are critical to the effective targeting of emergency humanitarian assistance on the ground. Of particular concern is the need for enhanced protection capacities for women and girls in refugee and IDP camps. Integration of a gender perspective is equally vital to the effectiveness of post-conflict reconstruction processes. It is essential that efforts to mainstream gender recognize women not only as victims of complex emergencies, but also as an important key to their solution.

6. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

19. The problem of sexual exploitation and abuse remains one of the most pressing issues arising in complex emergencies and armed conflicts. In July 2002, IASC adopted the Plan of Action prepared by the Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises,⁴ which established six core principles representing minimum standards of behaviour expected of all United

Nations civilian staff members. A draft Secretary-General's bulletin that will further institutionalize the six core principles through their incorporation into the codes of conduct and staff rules and regulations of all member organizations is currently being finalized. The Task Force is continuing to work on appropriate disciplinary procedures to be followed in the event of a breach of these principles. Several Member States are formally adopting policies requiring incorporation of the core principles into their own agreements with operational partners, as encouraged by the Plan of Action. Humanitarian agencies outside the United Nations system are engaged in similar efforts to adopt or revise their own codes of conduct.

20. Efforts to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises need to be reinforced by concrete action on the part of Member States if they are to be truly effective. The incorporation of the core principles into standards and codes of conduct for national armed forces and police forces, and the insistence by donor countries that all of their implementing partners include the core principles in their codes of conduct prior to release of donor funding, would facilitate this goal considerably. Another important measure for Member States would be to apply appropriate follow-up action in response to allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by their troops and to report to the Security Council on the action taken.

7. Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

21. Proper preparedness and contingency planning, including improved early warning capacity to identify possible disaster and crisis risks, are essential elements of an effective response to a natural disaster or complex humanitarian emergency. IASC has played a pivotal role in leading inter-agency processes that developed and endorsed the "Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance" (Contingency Planning Guidelines). The United Nations has also been strengthening the early warning tools and capacities of relevant departments and agencies, as well as country teams, to enable them to better plan for primary and secondary scenarios.

22. The regional contingency planning and preparedness effort that the United Nations and its partners undertook prior to the war in Iraq was a comprehensive and resource-intensive exercise. IASC played a key role in ensuring the development of contingency plans in and around Iraq that allowed agencies to pre-position supplies (a task hindered by the lack of advance contributions from donors) and to pre-deploy key response personnel. It also set the scene for close collaboration between the resident coordinators, United Nations organizations, the Red Cross Movement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations. Other important aspects of the contingency planning included the early launch of a preparedness "flash appeal" for Iraq, the deployment of humanitarian affairs officers in neighbouring countries, and the early establishment of common services, the Joint Logistics Centre, humanitarian air services, the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) and online coverage on ReliefWeb.

23. Improved coordination between members of IASC in preparedness and contingency planning remains a key objective for other complex emergencies. The incorporation of inter-agency contingency plans into the existing planning of United Nations country teams, based on the Contingency Planning Guidelines and common

assessments of levels of humanitarian risk, would strengthen their capacity to respond to natural disasters and complex emergencies. Enhanced coordination with donor planning in order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive response to humanitarian crises is an equally important goal.

8. Natural disasters

24. The occurrence of natural disasters has more than tripled over the last three decades, with an increasing number of people affected as a consequence. During that same period, however, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of deaths from natural disasters. The decline in casualties can be attributed in part to anticipation of potential catastrophes, including recurring natural disasters, based on knowledge of hazardous conditions and possible destructive events, and investment in protective measures. Nonetheless, lack of capacity to reduce the impact of natural hazards and environmental emergencies, especially in developing countries, remains a major hurdle.

25. The actions of Governments and civil society, with support from the international community, have demonstrated that appropriate interventions in disaster reduction can lead to a measurable reduction in disaster impact. In the case of Ethiopia, protective measures undertaken by the Government in cooperation with the international community helped reduce the scale of the food crisis. Key factors in the response included an efficient and credible government early warning system, the active involvement of donors in the assessment process from the very beginning of the drought crisis, and early advocacy by the Government, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, donor representatives and the media.

26. Experience has shown that the response to the threat of natural disasters requires coherent coordination and greater synergies among humanitarian and other actors. In order to improve comprehensive disaster management, a tripartite assessment was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat/International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to strengthen coordination and cooperation at the national and international levels. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also launched a new global partnership at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on an "Integrated Approach to Prevention, Preparedness for and Response to Environmental Emergencies in Support of Sustainable Development", which will also contribute to the objective of improving disaster management. Coordination in the European context has been enhanced by the Fribourg Process, which has enabled structured dialogue between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Member States, regional and international organizations and non-governmental organizations to promote coherence and complementarity in crisis management and humanitarian action.

27. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has continued to develop its coordination tools for natural disasters, such as the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. In 2002-2003, two UNDAC induction courses in Asia expanded the UNDAC system to this region. Work is also being undertaken with Member States in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/150

of 16 December 2002 to further improve the response and coordination of international search and rescue teams.

28. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is in the process of collecting and examining hundreds of existing international disaster response law provisions and other instruments in order to promote their improved harmonization and implementation. This exercise will also identify any gaps or inadequacies, which could become the subject of future examination by the international community so as to further strengthen the legal and policy framework surrounding international disaster response activities.

9. HIV/AIDS in emergencies

29. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has introduced and firmly established a new complexity in humanitarian crises which requires the rethinking and redefinition of traditional humanitarian assistance. The lessons of southern Africa illustrate that short-term humanitarian assistance programmes must be supported by concomitant emergency development interventions. Programming tools such as needs assessments, vulnerability analyses, the design of food rations and other nutrition-related activities are being adjusted in order to reflect this new reality.

30. For those countries affected by the combination of famine and HIV/AIDS, sustainable recovery is undermined owing to the breakdown of family support networks, decline in production and loss of income leading to greater impoverishment. Of particular concern is the fact that HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women and girls, who globally account for more than 50 per cent of new HIV infections. In Africa, women also account for 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force and are responsible for 80 per cent of the food production. The role of national actors as well as regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has been at the centre of the response, will continue to be crucial to alleviating the crisis in southern Africa. Strong political commitment and leadership, recognizing and protecting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, are also crucial in promoting an effective, long-term response to the epidemic.

31. The missions of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa have highlighted the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS when combined with other causes of vulnerability such as erratic rainfall, chronic poverty and poor policy environments. United Nations bodies are working together in the Regional Inter-agency Coordination Support Office (RIACSO) to raise awareness and emphasize the need to move beyond the traditional emergency response in order to find durable solutions to the situation in southern Africa. The Integrated Regional Information Network's PlusNews, an Internet-based HIV/AIDS news service for Africa, helps to address this need by reporting on community action programmes, government initiatives and the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS.

32. Beyond the southern African crisis, the international community is deeply concerned about the spread of HIV/AIDS in situations of armed conflict. The risk of HIV infection is exacerbated by the high incidence of sexual violence and sexual exploitation in conflict situations, as highlighted in the 2002 Human Rights Watch report on sexual violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To facilitate a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS in humanitarian crises, IASC is

finalizing guidelines for emergency response which will ensure the integration of the HIV/AIDS components into all relevant programming areas.

II. The transition from relief to development

A. Background

33. Transition has been a constant and evolving feature of the Economic and Social Council agenda since 1991. The 1996 report of the Secretary-General to the Council (A/51/172-E/1996/77) explained that relief and development activities often proceed at the same time, with one type of activities having an impact upon the other. By the late 1990s, the debate had shifted. The main concerns expressed in the Council were the need to avoid funding gaps that occur as development starts to re-engage and the need to forge stronger linkages between relief and development activities. Despite concerted efforts, the funding gap remains and linkages continue to be elusive. In transition, food aid and other lifesaving interventions are comparatively better funded, while other sectors that may also provide a key bridge between relief and development, such as water, health, sanitation, agriculture, education, the rule of law and good governance, remain chronically underfunded.

34. The most recent contexts suggest that successful transition entails much more than the creation of linkages. It requires a coherent strategy for restoring stability and normalcy. A joint Working Group on Transition Issues has been established by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with the involvement of IOM, the Red Cross Movement and non-governmental organizations, to improve the coherence of the United Nations response in transition. It aims to provide clear, consolidated and timely guidance to the United Nations system, including humanitarian, political and development actors, which are appropriate in transition contexts. Through its efforts, the Working Group is addressing the issues raised in Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/32 and the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387). The Working Group is currently in the midst of reviewing a range of United Nations responses in post-conflict transition situations. A final report, with recommendations for implementation, is expected by September 2003 and more details will be included in the Secretary-General's next report on the reform of the Organization. Already, however, a number of points have emerged from the efforts of the Working Group.

B. Elements of transition

35. One of the principal problems in successfully dealing with transition relates to the confusion caused by a lack of common definitions. The fact that Member States, humanitarians and development agencies have different views on what constitutes transition, recovery, rehabilitation and peace-building leads them to use these terms interchangeably and to apply them to a wide range of differing contexts. Broadly, however, four sorts of transition are referred to, each relating to the predominant cause of the crisis from which a country is emerging: wholesale economic transformation, sudden natural disasters, underlying structural problems and conflict. These types of transition can also occur in combination. The countries of

the Caucasus and Central Asia are undergoing massive economic transformation which has weakened the capacity of government to provide basic services just when economic disruption is increasing vulnerability. The countries of Central America have faced a number of short-lived natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Each event has abruptly curtailed the capacity of the State to provide basic services, though usually in a localized fashion, with overall management capacity remaining undamaged. Countries in the Horn of Africa frequently face natural disaster, but here the capacity of the State to address specific underlying structural issues (such as low investment in infrastructure and in secure land tenure) has limited the food security of rural households. As a result, when drought occurs, their ability to cope is limited. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia have endured years of conflict. Where countries experience protracted conflict, the capacity of the State is frequently weak. Long-term conflict generally transforms society — socially, through the erosion of social support structures; economically, through the development of “war economies”; and politically, through deteriorating capacity and limited accountability.

36. Given the current lack of definitional clarity, it is critical to be clear about the context of any given transition. The challenges in providing appropriate transitional assistance in natural disasters may be different from the challenges encountered during economic transformation. This year, with nascent peace in countries as varied as Angola and Sri Lanka, the challenges posed by the transition from conflict have been especially prominent.

C. Challenges

1. Appropriate assistance

37. Ensuring appropriate and timely assistance is a key challenge for humanitarian, development and political actors alike. This is especially true in post-conflict transition situations such as those in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Though warfare may have subsided, peace is not yet consolidated. Instability persists and a relapse into violence remains a possibility. The risk of relapse is particularly acute when regional or global influences are at work and parties to the conflict remain dissatisfied with the terms of ceasefires or peace processes. Under these circumstances, recovery assistance must do more than rebuild structures or institutions. It needs to aid in the consolidation of peace, counter the negative societal transformations that have occurred during the crisis, and counteract the tensions that led to the conflict. In other words, it must help to re-establish the enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society.

38. Much of this recovery assistance is specific to post-conflict transition and needs to be carried out in a timely fashion. If the situation is not addressed promptly, the consolidation of peace can be undermined, as exemplified by the failure of previous demobilization efforts in Sierra Leone. This places added responsibility on government, donors and assistance-providers. Both time-bound activities and longer-term processes must be launched. Among the time-bound activities that are immediately needed alongside continued relief are disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that offer former combatants a compelling alternative to the opportunities available in a war economy. Time-bound programmes are also needed to achieve the return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced

persons and refugees in a sustainable fashion, the revitalization of agriculture and trade, and the restoration of basic social services, all of which will help to reduce potentially destabilizing population movements. Among the longer-term processes that are needed are programmes to monitor and address new protection issues. These types of programmes are needed to avoid creating or aggravating social tensions, particularly over issues of land access, tenure and property restitution. In addition, restorative justice is needed to foster conditions for coexistence. Above all, new and multilayered efforts at capacity-building will be needed to create effective institutions of State administration which are essential to stability and normalcy and offer avenues of recourse other than violence.

2. Delivery versus support

39. Re-engaging government in the planning, management and direction of aid is a key element of all transition and a principle of effective transitional assistance. There are, however, instances during the early phases of post-conflict transition when Governments may still not have full control of their territory or the capacity to manage and support the delivery of assistance. This factor, and the capacity of civil society, will affect the extent to which relief and recovery are provided by the international community and the government. Post-conflict transition, therefore, must balance efforts to facilitate a Government's capacity to manage the assistance effort with the need to deliver assistance in a timely manner, where required and in accordance with humanitarian principles. Achieving a balance between these two needs is the fundamental challenge of post-conflict transition, and one made all the more difficult by the fact that the balance is not static. It changes in response to needs and government capacity, and it must purposefully move from substituting for government to supporting government.

3. Donor engagement

40. Donors often favour substitutive delivery of services through United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations without also working with national structures to re-establish or build service delivery capacities, and tend towards caution for a variety of reasons. They may point to human rights as a reason for lack of interest if parties to the peace process, or parties in government, have a history of human rights abuses. Where patterns of fiscal mismanagement, natural resource exploitation or lack of transparency have been revealed, donors have shown reluctance to move away from relief assistance to support for recovery and development. They may sometimes set unnecessarily high criteria, however, and, for political reasons, may choose not to establish long-term development relationships with countries that are not considered strategic or with whom they do not have historical ties. Adequate funding for all critical sectors and support for quickly building the capacity of governance remain the key to effective transition. Earlier engagement of donors in planning processes should therefore be pursued as one avenue for overcoming donor caution and ensuring success.

4. Planning and coordination

41. Post-conflict transition strategies are by nature complex, as they need to incorporate and integrate many more dimensions than is the case in humanitarian planning and include recovery, peace-building and reconstruction elements. Planning in post-conflict transition must also involve a broader range of actors such

as peace-building and peacekeeping missions and the international financial institutions. For example, the collaborative "4Rs" initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) brings together humanitarian and development actors to address the multifaceted transition challenges so as to secure the sustainability of refugees' return to their home countries. Frequently, however, in post-conflict transition, there is a lack of clear, integrated transition strategies jointly formulated by humanitarian, development and other actors with clear steps for the scaling down and transferring of key responsibilities such as information management and donor coordination. Strategies formulated by inter-agency and United Nations country teams also frequently fail to sufficiently indicate how peace will be consolidated and how different actors can assist in that cause. Instead, planning tends to be formulated as a response to assessed needs and assumed scenarios.

42. Where Governments provide the lead but require support, as in natural disaster and structural transition, coordination is a simpler exercise. In post-conflict transition, where government capacity to manage a response is limited, more comprehensive coordination is needed. In such cases ceasefires may open new areas of responsibility, increasing the humanitarian caseload (as occurred in Angola), or precipitate large-scale return (as was the case in Afghanistan). At the same time, a substantial set of recovery activities must be launched quickly to consolidate peace.

43. Coordination will need to keep up with the demands placed on it so as to deal with increasing relief assistance, peace-building and recovery work. To establish the right mix of assistance, applied in the critical areas at the right time, requires expanded and consistent information management and the capacity to analyse a continually evolving context. Minimum standards may need to be created or established to ensure a baseline for protection and assistance appropriate to the post-conflict transition, especially on matters related to the return of displaced populations. Planning will have to become more inclusive by engaging new partners. It will need to shift from a focus on assessed needs and assumed scenarios to identifying the means by which various actors can consolidate peace. Such circumstances only serve to re-emphasize the importance of a strategic approach to coordination. The integration of government into coordination is critical and requires an investment in capacity-building and support so that government can progressively plan and coordinate assistance on its own.

44. The effective management of transition activities is critically dependent on maintaining both adequate levels of coordination and support capacity for the United Nations country team led by the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator. The transition planning process at country level will need to be integrated across the United Nations system and allow flexibility to mix elements from various existing planning instruments and resource mobilization tools. As such, coordination capacity will need to encompass and integrate continued expertise in humanitarian coordination as well as establish new expertise in key transitional areas such as peace-building, economic and social recovery, and the restitution of the basic institutions of civil administration and government. This level of support at the country level will be critical for the effective planning and management of transition activities but is not yet capable of being realized. Humanitarian coordinators receive effective support during emergencies which is externally and separately funded through the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). During the transition, there may

well be a transfer from the humanitarian coordination system to that of United Nations resident coordinators. Effective transfer of coordination that maintains appropriate levels of capacity and support will become possible only if the resident coordinator system is strengthened and provided with more flexible resources.

III. Humanitarian financing and the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance

45. Events of the past year have underlined the need to better address the way in which humanitarian needs are financed. The drought in the Horn of Africa, coupled with complex food crises in southern Africa, dramatically increased overall humanitarian assistance requirements in 2002-2003. The potential addition of increased needs in the region of West Africa as well as Iraq, where the population remains heavily dependent on external food sources, raises concerns as to whether overall levels of humanitarian assistance are sufficient to meet global levels of need.

46. In making any assessment of the trends and direction of humanitarian assistance, there are three outstanding issues that need to be addressed: whether sufficient humanitarian assistance is available in relation to need, whether humanitarian assistance is equitably distributed with regard to humanitarian principles, and whether the assistance provided is effectively managed.

47. Overall levels of humanitarian assistance have averaged approximately US\$ 5.5 billion per year for the past three years.⁵ This represents an apparent doubling of overall levels of humanitarian aid since 1990, when the level of humanitarian assistance was US\$ 2.1 billion. However, the process of growth in humanitarian assistance has evolved in a series of phased increases, with major crises serving to increase levels of humanitarian assistance in distinct phases. The Ethiopian famine in the mid-1980s promoted a dramatic increase in humanitarian assistance. A further major increase took place in 1991 in response to another major surge in the levels of need, produced by the southern African food crisis. The Great Lakes crisis in 1994-1995 again led to increases in assistance. The Kosovo crisis in 1999 was responsible for the final step up to the current level of assistance. Frequently, food needs have been the main driver in increasing levels of response. These step increases in humanitarian assistance are generally consolidated after each major crisis and in many cases assistance may continue to fill the medium-term residual or structural gaps that result from the initial crisis. To this extent, the level of humanitarian assistance can be seen as a response to increasing need but it is also strongly driven by high levels of public concern for high-profile emergencies.

48. The growth in the volume of humanitarian assistance has occurred during a period of overall decline in the flows of official development assistance (ODA). This has resulted in humanitarian assistance's accounting for an increasing proportion of total ODA. By 2002, humanitarian assistance had accounted for 10 per cent of ODA compared with an average of less than 3 per cent of ODA between 1970-1990. This increase may be attributed not only to the high profile that humanitarian assistance enjoys but also to its value as a more flexible financial instrument for donors.

49. Over the past decade, increasing amounts of humanitarian assistance have been channelled towards longer-term emergencies. The top 10 recipients have been

consistently dominated by seven crises, for which over US\$ 5 billion was received between 1995 and 2001. The remaining volume of humanitarian assistance is spread across more than 100 countries, about 40 of which receive less than US\$ 1 million each year. The distribution of humanitarian assistance is uneven and not clearly distributed on the basis of need. Some countries continue to receive humanitarian assistance on a regular basis as a means of providing relief for distress and absolute impoverishment; in other cases, donors may use it as a substitute for development assistance when their domestic legislation or policies would preclude the provision of development assistance on human rights or other policy grounds. There is a risk that the levels of humanitarian assistance that are now committed to longer-term crises will limit the future growth of such assistance and limit the speed and capacity of the response to newly emerging crises.

50. The various uses of humanitarian assistance lead to a blurring of the distinction between humanitarian assistance and ODA. Indeed, the absence of agreed definitions of humanitarian assistance remains a source of problems in terms of monitoring aid performance. Currently, donors report their allocations to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which understands humanitarian assistance to be "emergency and distress relief". This definition is broad, hence there is no consistency in the way in which donors report to DAC. For example, no distinction is made between emergency relief as opposed to rehabilitation or recovery assistance which can be seen as more developmental. Some donors may also include conflict reduction and management as part of their humanitarian activities. For this reason, further thought should be given to developing definitions that clearly define eligible flows and provide a qualitative description of humanitarian assistance.

51. Assessing the adequacy of humanitarian assistance in relation to need is a complex task. One approximate measure is provided by the level of response to the Consolidated Appeals Process. While most appeals suffer from shortfalls of assistance, the variations are considerable. In 2002, 9 out of 25 countries and regions faced shortfalls of over 50 per cent. The largest shortfalls, however, occurring in countries such as Burundi and Liberia, are over 70 per cent. By contrast, Tajikistan received contributions that covered some 94.8 per cent of requirements. Such variations call into question the equity of the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the extent to which assistance is provided on an impartial basis. The reasons for such wide variations in responding to crises relate to the fact that donor decisions to allocate resources are driven primarily not by meeting needs, but rather by domestic considerations, traditional patterns of expenditure and geopolitical interests. This pattern of donor behaviour has resulted in a patchwork of activities, which results in a loss of coherence and limits the ability to meet global humanitarian need effectively.

52. There is no consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs are assessed. This is reflected in the variation in the amounts requested per beneficiary in country appeals. In 2002, 8 out of 22 appeals requested amounts of between \$20 and \$50 per head, 9 requested between \$50 and \$100 per head, and 1 requested over \$200 per head. This variation exists not just between countries but also from year to year. Needs tend to be assumed rather than diagnosed, with the result that donors mistrust the value of assessments and agencies have an insufficiently firm basis for challenging the assumptions or preferences of individual donors. As a result, humanitarian assistance is far more inequitably distributed than it should be.

53. The last decade has seen an increase in the number of channels for humanitarian assistance, as well as in the number of actors involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance on the ground. In Afghanistan, both donors and the armed forces of Member States have been directly engaged in humanitarian activities. The use of private companies working in partnership with non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance in Iraq and elsewhere has established yet another delivery channel. Although there is as yet no clear trend demonstrating a significant increase in the volumes of assistance going through these means, this development increases the potential for duplication of activity and creates a larger challenge with respect to maintaining the coherence and integrity of humanitarian response. The greater range of actors further reinforces the need for robust coordination structures and a comprehensive and inclusive planning process in which all are engaged.

54. Recently there has been considerable variation in the proportion of assistance distributed through the United Nations system. In 1999, only 12 per cent of humanitarian assistance had been channelled through the United Nations. By 2001, this figure had risen to some 30 per cent, the highest proportion ever. To a large extent, this variation could be related to the growth in levels of food aid now moved through multilateral channels. Non-governmental agencies are the other important channel for humanitarian assistance: over \$1.4 billion from both private and official sources was channelled through non-governmental organizations in 2001. Non-governmental agencies also raise and contribute significant levels of humanitarian assistance (over \$500 million in 2001).

55. The effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is dependent on speed of response and predictable funding, which enable necessary humanitarian activities to be carried out promptly. However, the current nature of humanitarian finance has created a patchwork of response which is, with a few notable exceptions, rigidly linked to supporting specific elements of an emergency response at the national level. The consequences are even more serious at the global level and result in an inability to effectively address the needs of "forgotten emergencies" and mobilize resources between countries in order to ensure an improved, impartial response to need. An increased commitment by donors to principles of good donorship that recognize the importance of funding allocation in proportion to needs will help to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. However, for international response to emergencies to be proportional to need, it will be necessary for donors to place more trust in the United Nations system of coordination and to facilitate mechanisms that assist the United Nations in responding more flexibly by increasing the level of unearmarked resources in emergencies.

IV. Observations and recommendations of the Secretary-General

56. The past year has seen progress in bringing conflict to an end for some of the world's longer-running emergencies. Despite such promising developments, however, the conflicts in West Africa, for example, continue to be a threat to the region as a whole. The challenge of protecting civilians in armed conflict remains a formidable task, especially when the humanitarian workers tasked with providing civilians with assistance are murdered and abducted. The year has also brought

about increased awareness about the effects of HIV/AIDS in the context of humanitarian emergencies, particularly the increased vulnerability that the disease can cause. The situation in Iraq has brought more focus on issues of international humanitarian law and has underlined the importance of promoting principled humanitarian interaction in order to address humanitarian needs in the country. The unique characteristics and causes of the HIV/AIDS-related crises in southern Africa as well as the situation in Iraq place the onus on the United Nations to clearly define its humanitarian role and responsibilities in such situations.

57. The importance of promoting effective coordination lies at the core of the themes related to transition and humanitarian financing. Coordination in the context of the transition from relief to development is a demanding and time-critical process, which requires the full engagement of Governments and donors at the earliest stages. In transition countries where relations and structures are created, it is critical to ensure that humanitarian processes are moved to longer-term structures. The nature of humanitarian financing is unsystematic owing to a patchwork of different policies and practices, which in turn lead to inconsistencies when meeting humanitarian needs. Major gaps occur when resources for some emergencies are insufficient to meet needs. Efforts must be undertaken to ensure that humanitarian financing is better linked with humanitarian principles. A clearer definition and understanding of what constitutes the humanitarian response and its relationship with transition and development aid are also needed. The lack of agreed definitions contributes to unevenness in the flow and quality of humanitarian assistance and also hinders the development of a coherent response to transition. A number of key processes are now in place to address this critical concern and the engagement of the international community is crucial for their success.

58. **The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish to:**

Protection of civilians

- (a) Urge Member States to safeguard principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law in their responses to security threats;
- (b) Urge Member States and non-State actors to bring to an end the climate of impunity by ensuring that those responsible for attacks against humanitarian staff are promptly brought to justice;

Internally displaced persons

- (c) Encourage Member States to welcome a collaborative approach and support humanitarian agencies in their continuing endeavours to provide a more predictable response on behalf of internally displaced persons;
- (d) Encourage Member States with internally displaced persons to develop national laws, policies and minimum standards on internal displacement consistent with international standards, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

Gender mainstreaming

- (e) Encourage humanitarian agencies to coordinate, consolidate and promote a gender perspective in all humanitarian assistance activities and to implement existing policies, tools and guidelines on gender mainstreaming;

Sexual violence and exploitation

(f) Urge Member States to use the "core principles" in their standards and codes of conduct for national armed forces and police forces and to take appropriate follow-up action in response to allegations of sexual violence and exploitation and, similarly, urge donor countries to insist that all of their implementing partners include the core principles in their codes of conduct prior to the release of donor funding;

Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

(g) Urge United Nations country teams to develop hazard analysis and monitoring mechanisms to identify potential crises, to develop common assessments of levels of humanitarian risk and to incorporate into their existing planning frameworks the "Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance" in order to strengthen their capacity to respond to humanitarian crises;

Natural disasters

(h) Stress the need for increased national and regional capacity-building in early warning and monitoring of natural hazards, natural disaster preparedness, mitigation and response by strengthening coordination in the areas of information-sharing and analysis, logistics support, response coordination and strengthening of relationships with existing regional structures;

HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies

(i) Urge Member States to implement the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS,⁶ with particular focus on the time-bound targets related to HIV/AIDS in conflict- and disaster-affected regions;

(j) Recognize the important role of humanitarian agencies in addressing HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies and encourage them to factor HIV/AIDS considerations into their humanitarian coordination and planning efforts, inter alia, in the areas of early warning and contingency planning;

(k) Call upon humanitarian and development organizations to strengthen cooperation in order to ensure that the longer-term developmental implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in emergency situations are adequately addressed;

Transition from relief to development

(l) Encourage Member States to recognize that timely, appropriate and sustained support is critical to managing post-conflict transition, including early engagement in planning, more even funding across sectors, and more support for recovery activities, especially capacity-building of local governing institutions, and, in this context, to take note of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations Development Group Joint Working Group on Transition Issues;

(m) Encourage Member States to recognize that the need for coordination increases and becomes more complex in post-conflict transition and call upon Member States to increase support for integrated coordination, which would include information management, inclusive planning, donor coordination, strengthening of the resident coordinator system and the progressive integration of government into coordination mechanisms and processes;

Humanitarian financing

(n) Encourage donors to improve their response to humanitarian emergencies and reinforce their respect for humanitarian principles by establishing agreed principles of good donorship behaviour and practice along with mechanisms for their review;

(o) Encourage donors to allocate funding in proportion to needs and to ensure more equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance to meet global humanitarian needs in their entirety;

(p) Encourage donors to establish stable, predictable and adequate funding to meet humanitarian needs while reaffirming the primary responsibility of States for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders;

(q) Enhance and support the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership for operations and coordination of international humanitarian action by: increasing the flexibility of funding to include non-earmarked contributions to United Nations organizations responding to humanitarian crises; establishing longer-term multi-year funding; and striving to avoid the use of regular humanitarian budgets for the financing of actions implemented by armed forces.

Notes

¹ Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/wrbw.nsf>

² United Nations *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

³ Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/wrbw.nsf>

⁴ Available at <http://www.unicef.org/media/publications/iasctfplanofaction.pdf>

⁵ Data and figures for funding are drawn from a series of ongoing studies on humanitarian financing.

⁶ General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.



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Items 123 and 124 of the preliminary list*

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Programme planning

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Programme 23

Public information

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).
2. Pursuant to regulation 5.1 of the Regulations and Rules, the medium-term plan, as approved and revised by the General Assembly, shall serve as the framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budget.
3. A comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information was conducted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001 and the Secretary-General's reform efforts (see A/57/387 and Corr.1). The General Assembly, in paragraph 11 of its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, welcomed the proposal to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, including the restructuring of the Department of Public Information. In paragraph 12 of the same resolution, the General Assembly invited the Committee on Information to engage actively in the process.
4. In accordance with the above, the report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of the United Nations in the field of public information and communications (A/AC.198/2003/2), which detailed the new structure and operating concepts of the Department, was reviewed by the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session, in April-May 2003. The Committee, in paragraph 33 of its

* A/58/50 Rev.1 and Corr.1.



report (A/58/21),¹ welcomed the new subprogramme structure, which includes strategic communications services, news services, library services and outreach services.

5. Accordingly, the revision proposed in the annex to the present document replaces programme 23, Public information, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 as revised by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/282 of 20 December 2002.² The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/6 (Sect. 28)) takes into account the new subprogramme structure, which is different from that of programme 23 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

6. As part of the effort to focus on core competencies, the Cartographic Section is being transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Accordingly, the activities described in paragraph 23.34 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 will be carried out by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

7. Because of the magnitude of the revisions, it was not considered practical to show the changes by using boldface type for the new text and striking out the text to be deleted. Accordingly, the narrative is presented as new and does not identify separately the new text and the text to be deleted.

8. In order to comply with the above-mentioned regulation 5.1, it is recommended that the General Assembly approve the revised medium-term plan for programme 23, Public information, as contained in the annex.

Notes

¹ To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21*.

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/57/6/Rev. 1)*, programme 23.

Annex

Proposed revisions to programme 23, Public information, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005*

Overall orientation

[Replaces old overall orientation; old paras. 23.1-23.6 are replaced by the new paragraphs below]

23.1 The overarching mandate of the Department, which dates back to General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, is to increase awareness and understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world. However, the comprehensive review of the Department undertaken in 2002 and described below, found that the Department as a whole suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of its having too many mandates and missions. To help clarify the goals and purposes of the Department, and to enhance its overall effectiveness and efficiency, a new mission statement has been formulated, as follows:

"The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact."

23.2 Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, a comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information was undertaken in 2002. The initial results of the review were submitted to the Committee on Information (see A/AC.198/2002/2). Subsequently, a final report on the review was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session as part of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). Guided by the reform efforts of the Secretary-General, the comprehensive review served to align the Department's core competencies with the long list of mandates it carries out. In adhering to its renewed mission, the Department will be guided by the priorities laid down by the General Assembly. Its core message, with the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) as its main guide, will focus on the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the battle against international terrorism and the needs of the African continent (see resolution 57/130 B).

23.3 The Department of Public Information is responsible for implementing the programme of activities under this section. These activities are carried out at Headquarters in New York and through the worldwide network of United Nations information centres and services. The programme is guided by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organ, the Committee on Information.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/57/6 Rev.1).

23.4 A new operating model, which aims to improve the Department's ability to deliver effective and targeted information programmes, has been created for the Department to realize its mission. It is based on a clear conception of the Department's role and an elaboration of its functions in a manner that emphasizes current communication challenges, while also providing the expected services to Member States. The model further recognizes that content generation emanates from the other departments and offices of the Secretariat, as well as from the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, while content coordination and refinement, as well as content presentation and distribution, are the responsibility of the Department, working in close cooperation with the media, Member States and civil society partners.

23.5 As a result of the new operating model, a new structure for the Department, comprising the Strategic Communications Division, the News and Media Division and the Outreach Division was put into effect in November 2002.

23.6 The transformation of the Department of Public Information, as envisaged in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1), will ensure that the United Nations has an effective communication mechanism in place to tell its story and thus gain the public support that is essential for strengthening the Organization. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring the Department, and invited the Committee to engage actively in this process.

23.7 The United Nations information centres, the United Nations information services and the information components of the United Nations field offices serve as branch offices of the Department. As such, they are integral to the implementation of the Department's strategies and the work of its divisions in reaching key constituencies at the local level. The Department is developing an action plan to implement the proposal of the Secretary-General, of which the General Assembly took note in paragraph 15 of its resolution 57/300, to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a regional hub in Western Europe. This proposal does not include the United Nations information services in Geneva and Vienna since they perform functions essential to the work of the United Nations offices in those cities. In paragraph 40 of draft resolution B recommended by the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session for adoption by the General Assembly (see A/58/21), the General Assembly would reaffirm paragraph 15 of its resolution 57/300. This new operating concept will also be aimed at achieving a better distribution of resources to information centres in developing countries and the redeployment of resources to other high-priority activities, such as advancing multilingualism on the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of major product and service lines, in accordance with results-based management — activities that have been strongly supported by Member States but for which resources are not available.

23.8 The Department will enhance its capacity to respond to unpredictable and fast-moving events around the world by providing information services to the media, Member States, non-governmental organizations and the public on United Nations actions in connection with these critical situations, including through the provision of guided tours and briefing programmes in New York, Geneva and Vienna, providing services for a total of approximately 1.4 million visitors per biennium. Its expertise will be strengthened through cooperation with relevant substantive

Secretariat departments and offices and organizations of the United Nations system. It will continue to disseminate the United Nations message through traditional means of communication as well as using new technologies, and will take the lead in modernizing library services throughout the Organization.

Subprogramme 1 **Strategic communications services**

[Replaces old subprogramme 1, Promotional services; old paras. 23.7-23.13 are replaced by the new paragraphs below]

Objective

23.9 The objective of the subprogramme is to broaden understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations on priority issues.

Strategy

23.10 Within the Department of Public Information, the responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies primarily with the Strategic Communications Division, which has been enhanced by the inclusion of the network of United Nations information centres and services, as well as the Africa Section. The subprogramme has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred on main themes, particularly the priorities outlined by the General Assembly and established by the Secretary-General. The Division develops communication strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, the United Nations funds and programmes and the organizations of the United Nations system, to promote the work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the Millennium Declaration as its guide.

23.11 These messages will be strategically conveyed to the public around the world through proactive relations with the media and other key intermediaries. Under the guidance of the Information Centres Service at Headquarters, the United Nations information centres and services and the information components of United Nations offices will work through local intermediaries to adapt this substantive content to their audiences, giving a local voice to global United Nations messages. The information components of peace missions will also carry these messages.

23.12 In its resolution 57/7 of 4 November 2002, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations to strengthen its advocacy role and public information activities in support of Africa's development. The Africa Section will promote awareness among opinion leaders in Africa and in the international community of the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and of the domestic and international efforts required for recovery and development. It will produce a range of information materials and activities, including *Africa Recovery*, and will ensure their dissemination to a diverse public as well as to target groups, such as parliamentarians, policy makers and civil society.

Expected accomplishments

23.13 Expected accomplishments of the subprogramme would include successful collaboration with client departments to develop communication strategies on

priority issues; increased awareness of key thematic issues among target audiences through the implementation of communication strategies on those issues; and increased utility of materials on priority issues that meet the needs of targeted media.

23.14 As mentioned in paragraph 23.7 above, the subprogramme will develop an action plan to implement the proposal of the Secretary-General to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a regional hub in Western Europe.

Indicators of achievement

23.15 Indicators of achievement would include the percentage of clients that indicate satisfactory collaboration; the percentage of target audiences indicating increased awareness; and the percentage of media outlets that indicate satisfaction with materials produced in support of communication strategies.

Subprogramme 2 News services

[Replaces old subprogramme 2, Information services; old paras. 23.14-23.23 are replaced by the new paragraphs below]

Objective

23.16 The objective of the subprogramme is to increase the interest of news organizations in, as well as their access to, up-to-date news and other information about the Organization.

Strategy

23.17 Within the Department of Public Information, the responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies primarily with the News and Media Division (which includes the Internet Service, the Press Service and the Radio and Television Service) and the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. This objective of the subprogramme will be accomplished through the real-time delivery, to media organizations at United Nations Headquarters and in all regions, of authoritative, accurate, balanced and, whenever possible, customized news and information materials about the goals and activities of the United Nations system. Developing country media will be a particular focus of this subprogramme, which will utilize both traditional media and new information technologies, including the Internet, in complementary and reinforcing ways.

23.18 The subprogramme will also continue to focus on maximizing the synergies made possible by the development of information technologies to realize the strategy outlined above, utilizing the daily output of the United Nations News Service, the United Nations web site, United Nations Radio and United Nations Television, including video, photos and press releases. Underpinning the subprogramme will be a major project, begun in the 2000-2001 biennium, to modernize the Department's production and broadcast infrastructure, including further digitization. The creation of the Internet Service will contribute substantially to the strengthened and coordinated utilization of the Internet as a multimedia

channel for both the production of such news materials and their dissemination to all regions quickly and in all official languages.

23.19 The subprogramme will proactively reach out directly to journalists and media organizations and seek partnerships with broadcasters to ensure that the news media in all regions have access at all times to news about United Nations activities and to the perspectives of the Organization as it addresses the priority concerns identified by the Member States.

23.20 The multilingual capacity of the United Nations web site will also be strengthened.

Expected accomplishments

23.21 Expected accomplishments of the subprogramme would include satisfaction with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services to the media, delegations, other audiences and redisseminators on the role of the United Nations in addressing the priority issues before the Organization.

Indicators of achievement

23.22 Indicators of achievement would include the percentage of users indicating satisfaction with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services.

Subprogramme 3 Library services

[Title and objective of Subprogramme 3 remains unchanged; however, old paras. 23.25-23.30 are replaced by the new paragraphs below]

Objective

23.23 The objective of the subprogramme is to facilitate access to timely and up-to-date library products and services for use by delegates, permanent missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide.

Strategy

23.24 Within the Department of Public Information, the responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in coordination with other United Nations libraries and libraries of the wider United Nations system. The subprogramme aims to create and/or provide timely and up-to-date information products and services to meet the needs of delegates, secretariat staff and researchers; to facilitate access to United Nations information for depository libraries and the general public worldwide; to contribute to bridging the digital divide; to mobilize the international library community, in particular depository libraries, as conduits of outreach to civil society; and to oversee and coordinate the activities of United Nations libraries.

23.25 The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in coordination with other United Nations libraries and libraries of the wider United Nations system, will continue to move in the direction of becoming a virtual library, while not neglecting the print collections

of United Nations documents, books, serials and government documents required by its users. There will be increasing emphasis on the creation and delivery of electronic information, outreach to depository libraries and support for multilingualism. The delivery of customized information directly to the desktops of permanent missions at Headquarters and Secretariat staff worldwide will be expanded. The Library's Internet and Intranet sites will be enriched and further developed in all six official languages, with multilingual retrieval capabilities. Access to commercially available electronic information will be made available in a cost-effective way through the United Nations System Consortium. The access of depository libraries to United Nations databases will be promoted, where feasible, to ensure rapid, complete and cost-effective document distribution. Through active participation in inter-agency library forums, the Library will promote the sharing of information throughout the United Nations system.

23.26 In-house creation and processing of data, including databases and other electronic products, published indexes, standards and guidelines for bibliographic control and multilingual reference tools will be expanded and improved. The United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) Thesaurus will be regularly maintained as a six-language database. Two comprehensive, accurate and high-quality annual editions of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* will be published, covering the years 2002 and 2003, and will constitute input for parallel CD-ROM versions of the *Yearbook*.

23.27 A major focus will be on training, including courses for Headquarters users and depository librarians overseas, as well as electronic delivery of advice, manuals and database structures to small United Nations libraries in the field.

Expected accomplishments

23.28 Expected accomplishments of the subprogramme would include easier, more extensive and timelier access by users to products and services of the Library; and timely issuance of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

Indicators of achievement

23.29 Indicators of achievement would include user satisfaction with quality, timeliness and ease of access to the products and services of the Library; and reduced time lag between the end of the year covered and the publication date of the relevant volume of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

Subprogramme 4 Outreach services

[Replaces old subprogramme 4, Publication services; old paras. 23.31-23.36 are replaced by the new paragraphs below]

Objective

23.30 The objective of the subprogramme is to inform and stimulate opinion and debate through outreach efforts targeted directly to the public and in alliance with key partners, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, other

representatives of civil society, the media and the general public, using the Millennium Declaration as a guide.

Strategy

23.31 Responsibility for the subprogramme lies with the Outreach Division, which includes the Civil Society Service, the Sales and Marketing Section and the secretariat of the Publications Board.

23.32 In this connection, the Outreach Division will develop, strengthen and expand its relationships with partners both within the United Nations system and among non-governmental organizations, the academic community and the private sector. The Outreach Division will also seek opportunities to promote more effectively its programmes and services designed for those audiences, as well as for the general public, capitalizing on the opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies, including the Internet and videoconferencing.

Expected accomplishments

23.33 Expected accomplishments of the subprogramme would include enhanced understanding of the role, work and concerns of the United Nations resulting from outreach activities, programmes and services.

Indicators of achievement

23.34 Indicators of achievement would include the percentage of target audiences indicating satisfaction that their understanding of the United Nations has grown or improved.

Legislative mandates

Programme 23 Public information

General Assembly resolutions

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1086 (XI) | Public information activities of the United Nations |
| 2897 (XXVI) | Review and appraisal of the United Nations information policies and activities |
| 3047 (XXVII) | Revenue-producing activities |
| 33/115 A-C | Questions relating to information |
| 34/182 | Questions relating to information |
| 57/130 A-B | Questions relating to information |
| 57/6 | International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 |
| 57/7 | Final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| 57/43 | Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie |
| 57/90 | United Nations Disarmament Information Programme |
| 57/101 | International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan |
| 57/106 | Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers |
| 57/108 | Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat |
| 57/109 | Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat |
| 57/124 | Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories |
| 57/129 | International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers |
| 57/139 | Dissemination of information on decolonization |
| 57/144 | Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit |
| 57/158 | United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, 2002 |
| 57/162 | International Year of Rice, 2004 |
| 57/164 | Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family |

- 57/195 The fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
- 57/212 United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004
- 57/238 World Summit on the Information Society
- 57/242 Preparations for the International Ministerial Conference on Transit Transport Cooperation
- 57/245 International Year of Mountains, 2002
- 57/249 Culture and development
- 57/252 Activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003
- 57/254 United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- 57/266 Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)
- 57/277 Public administration and development
- 57/283 B Pattern of conferences (sect. III, Documentation- and publication-related matters)
- 57/294 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa
- 57/300 Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change

General Assembly decision

- 57/579 Strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization



**General Assembly
Security Council**

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General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session
Items 74 and 83 of the preliminary list*

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

General and complete disarmament

**International cooperation in the peaceful uses of
outer space**

**Letter dated 4 June 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of
the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

We have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of the Joint Statements by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin on the new strategic relationship (see annex I) and on United States-Russian cooperation in space (see annex II), adopted in Saint Petersburg on 1 June 2003.

We would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annexes were distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under items 74 and 83 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) John **Negroponte**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
United States of America to the
United Nations

(Signed) Sergey **Lavrov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation to the
United Nations

* A/58/50/Rev. I and Corr. I.



Annex I to the letter dated 4 June 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin on the new strategic relationship

On 24 May 2002, we pledged to build a new strategic relationship between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We declared our partnership, and our commitment to work together to advance stability, security and prosperity for our peoples, and to work jointly to counter global challenges and help resolve regional conflicts. We also declared that where we had differences, we would work to resolve them in a spirit of mutual respect.

We have met again to reaffirm our nations' partnership and our commitment to meet together the challenges of the twenty-first century.

With the completion of the ratification procedures by the United States Senate and the two houses of the Russian Federation Assembly, we have been able to exchange instruments of ratification for the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. The Treaty takes effect immediately. The deep reductions of strategic nuclear warheads that it codifies are another indication of the transformed relationship between our two countries.

We will intensify efforts to confront the global threats of terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, that threaten our peoples and freedom-loving peoples around the world.

In this regard, we declare our intention to advance concrete joint projects in the area of missile defence which will help deepen relations between the United States and Russia.

**Annex II to the letter dated 4 June 2003 from the Permanent
Representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of
America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President
Vladimir V. Putin on United States-Russian cooperation in space**

The loss of the space shuttle Columbia has underscored the historic role of the United States and Russia as partners in space exploration, who have persevered despite tragedy and adversity. During this challenging time, our partnership has deepened and the International Space Station (ISS) programme remains strong. The extraordinary efforts of our countries continue. The United States is committed to safely returning the space shuttle to flight, and the Russian Federation is committed to meeting the ISS crew transport and logistics resupply requirements necessary to maintain our joint American astronaut and Russian cosmonaut teams on board the ISS until the space shuttle returns to flight.

We confirm our mutual aspiration to ensure the continued assembly and viability of the International Space Station as a world-class research facility, relying on our unprecedented experience of bilateral and multilateral interaction in space. We reaffirm our commitment to the mission of human space flight and are prepared to take energetic steps to enhance our cooperation in the application of space technology and techniques.